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SONY'S CINEMA SENSATION

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DVD
FLAT TV
MICROS
RECEIVERS
AND MORE

+CD PLAYER SUPERTEST

THE HI-FI POD DOCK

ark your Pod in the deck – the £250 MP3 party animal

BEST DAB RADIO YET?

Why Pure's amazing all-new Evoke is a digital masterpiece

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HI-FI HOME CINEMA TV MP3 SMART BUYING MADE EASY!

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WHAT HI-FI?
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This month

For all of MP3's appeal –

newly boosted by the awesome i-deck p9 and Creative's Sleek p13 – it

can't match the sheer thrill of an exceptional CD player p39. We've also stopped cooing over flat TVs long enough to be stunned by the quality of what could be CRT's last stand p14

CLARE NEWSOME, EDITOR clare.newsome@haynet.com

SONY'S CINEMA SENSATION

This stunning new £449 system includes everything you need for a starter cinema in a single box – it's the best-value instant movie solution we've found so far **p68**

THE HI-FI iPOD DOCK

Forget cheap speaker systems that make your MP3s sound tinnier than a sardine-packing factory: Monitor Audio's i-deck is the real deal **p9**

NEW SEASON SPECIAL

There's a host of hot new kit about to hit the shops – but not before we've tested it here first. From flat TVs to CD and DVD players, we've got the lot **p6**

BEST DAB RADIO YET?

Digital radio pioneer, Pure, has updated its premium Evoke-2 model. Read just how good it is on **p12**

WHY WE'RE NO.1...

OUR TESTS ARE CONDUCTED IN DEDICATED FACILITIES

Our suite of test rooms are respected the world over, and every product is reviewed in them by our team of experts.

WE'RE COMPLETELY IMPARTIAL

Every verdict is that of the magazine, not an advertiser or press officer. When we say something's good, it is.

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We have nearly 30 years of experience. We've seen great products come and go, and know a flash in the pan when we see one.

WE SPOT THE BIG TRENDS FIRST

We have a proven track record of being first to spot the big trends, from CD to MP3.

DECEMBER 1999 MP3 COVER STORY
Testing MP3 players back when the iPod was just a twinkle in Apple's eye...

WE'VE GOT THE WORLD OF SOUND AND VISION COVERED

We're here to cover the world of sound and vision, from the latest flat screens to the newest MP3 players. Find it all in every issue.

AND WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU

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hifianswers@haynet.com
mp3answers@haynet.com

"The tune's rampaging bass, crashing cymbals, lashings of feedback and frantic vocals can result in a chaotic, confused sound, bass that bounces around like a dodgem and treble that could slice sun-baked Parmesan cheese. Until you play it on the amazing Ambient" TEMPTATION, p76

Contents

FIRST TESTS page 6

COVER STORY **16 pages of verdicts on the latest kit**
including JBL's space-age multimedia speakers; Sony's do-it-all DVD recorder; a lovely Sharp LCD, and two tweaked Cambridge Audio CD players

SUPERTEST page 38

CD players
Seven of the best high-end silver disc-spinners battle
£1400 – £1750

GROUP TEST

DVD players page 52
£99 – £130
Bargain prices and super-hot performance is guaranteed

AV receivers page 60
£250 – £350
Chock-a-block with toys and pumping out serious sounds

Cinema-in-a-box page 68
COVER STORY £400 – £599
Everything in one box, just add DVDs for some fantastic fun

TEST EXPRESS

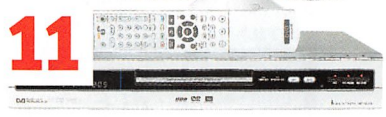
Mini systems page 58
£200 – £480
Convenience and quality hi-fi sound in four smart boxes

Media centre PCs page 74
£799 – £1229
Music and movies on your PC

TEMPTATIONS page 76

World's most desirable kit
This month includes an ultra-alluring Primaluna valve amp

12



11

21

06

38

68

60

BEST BUYS page 32
What's hottest in hi-fi and home cinema – at a glance

INSTANT EXPERT page 50
Projectors mean big screens at sensible prices – here's the lowdown

SOUND ADVICE page 80
Our team of experts answers your queries, with in-depth advice sections every month

NEWS page 34
NEXT MONTH page 39

BUYER'S GUIDE page 91
Every month our Buyer's Guide features verdicts, specifications and prices on over 1400 products. It's the buyers' bible, distilling years of What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision know-how into an easily mined resource. Updated every month – it's all you'll need.

SUBSCRIPTIONS page 36
GLOSSARY page 186
COMPANY CONTACTS page 188

OVER 1400 REVIEWED & RATED PRODUCTS

TESTED THIS MONTH

TVs & PROJECTORS

CRT TVs
Panasonic TX-32DTM1 £700
Page 14

LCD TVs
Loewe Concept L32 £1799
Page 11
Sharp LC-45GD1E £5500
Page 21

REAR-PROJECTION TELEVISION
Sagem Axium HD-D56 £2700
Page 28

PROJECTORS
Yamaha DPX-1200 £8000
Page 22

HI-FI

CD PLAYERS
Cambridge Audio 540C v2.0 £200
Cambridge Audio 640C v2.0 £250
Page 6
Copland CDA823 £1750
Cyrus CD8x/PSX-R £1400
Page 40
Cyrus CD6s £650
Page 14
Densen Beat B-400 Plus £1400
Exposure Classic XXII £1400
Page 43
Myryad MXC6000 £1400
Naim CD5x £1450
Page 44

EQUIPMENT RACK
Atacama Europa Rack £400
Page 27

MICRO SYSTEMS
Denon D-M35DAB £300
Page 58
Onkyo CR-505DAB £220
Page 58
Panasonic SCPM71SD £200
TEAC Reference 300MkII £480
Page 59

PORTABLE DAB/FM RADIO
Pure Evoke-2 XT £150
Page 12

PRE/POWER AMP
Audio Research LS16MkII/150.2 £3499
Page 79

STEREO AMPLIFIER
Primaluna Prologue One £849
Page 78
Inca Design Talon £700
Page 25

STEREO PREAMP
Arcam C31 £1200
Page 25

STEREO SPEAKERS
KEF iQ5 £400
Page 21
Monitor Audio Silver RS1 £350
Page 18
Wharfedale Diamond 9.0 £100
Page 16

HOME CINEMA

ACCESSORIES
Gefen HD 2x1 HDMI Switcher £176
Logitech Harmony Remote £100
Monster Screen Clean £20
Nevo SL Remote £650
Page 30

DIGITAL TV TUNER/HD RECORDER
Panasonic TU-CTH100 £280
Page 27

DVD/SACD PLAYER
Philips DVP9000S £400
Page 16

DVD/HARD-DISK RECORDER
Sony RDR-HX710 £500
Page 11

DVD PLAYERS
Denon DVD-1720 £130
Pioneer DV-585A £130
Page 54
Toshiba SD-350E £99
Yamaha DVD-557 £130
Page 55

HDMI CABLE
IXOS XHT-458 £80
Page 30

MEDIA CENTRE PCS
HP M7041 £799
Elonex Artisan LX £999
Page 74
Hi Grade DMS II £1099
Sony Vaio FS215Z £1229
Page 75
Uvem Classic 200/10000 RA £3500
Page 18

MULTICHANNEL AMPLIFIERS
Sony STR-DA7100ES £1699
Page 22

MULTICHANNEL RECEIVERS
Denon AVR-1906 £330
Harman Kardon AVR 135 £350
Page 62
Onkyo TX-SR503E £250
Pioneer VSX-915 £300
Page 63
Sony STR-DB895 £350
Yamaha RX-V457 £299
Page 64

MULTICHANNEL SPEAKER PACKAGES
Acoustic Energy Linear 5.1 £1300
Page 13
Pioneer SV410 £399
Page 27
Revel Concerta Package £3100
Page 28

PROJECTORS
Yamaha DPX-1200 £8000
Page 22

SUBWOOFERS
Velodyne SPL-1000R £899
Page 18

HOME CINEMA IN A BOX SYSTEMS
JBL DSC1000 £400
Sony DAV-500ZF
Page 69
Denon DHT-500SD £500
Panasonic SC-HT880W £600
Page 71

TURNTABLES
Clearaudio Ambient/Satisfy/Concerto £4040
Page 76

MP3

DIGITAL MEDIA PLAYER
Archos AV700 £400
Pinnacle Showcenter £200
Page 30

iPOD DOCK
Monitor Audio i-deck £250
Page 9

MP3 PLAYER
Creative Zen Sleek £200
Page 12

MULTIMEDIA SPEAKERS
JBL Encounter £99
Page 12

NEW THIS MONTH

iPOD DOCK
Monitor Audio £250
Page 9

TELEVISIONS
Loewe £1799
Page 11
Panasonic £700
Page 14
Sharp £5500
Page 21
Sagem £2700
Page 28

DIGITAL RECORDERS
Sony £500
Page 11
Panasonic £280
Page 27

DAB RADIO
Pure £150
Page 12

MP3 PLAYER
Creative £200
Page 12

SPEAKERS
JBL £99
Page 12
Acoustic Energy £1300
Page 13
Wharfedale £100
Page 16
Monitor Audio £350
Page 18
KEF £400
Page 21
Pioneer £399
Page 27
Revel £3100
Page 28

First Tests

PACKED WITH EXCLUSIVE REVIEWS OF HOT NEW KIT

The best budget CD players ever?

CD PLAYER
CAMBRIDGE AUDIO
AZUR 540C V2
★★★★★
£200

FOR
Energetic, lively delivery; great levels of detail; excellent remote

AGAINST
The 640C is only £50 more... but nothing really

VERDICT
Budget kit has probably never looked or sounded better than this updated 540C

CD PLAYER
CAMBRIDGE AUDIO
AZUR 640C V2
★★★★★
£250

FOR
Amazing solidity and focus; excellent rhythmic ability; sounds natural and realistic

AGAINST
Nothing – it's worth every penny

VERDICT
If you can scrape together that extra £50 you'll find it money well spent – the 640C is a stellar performer

Like their predecessors, the Version 2.0 540C and 640C come in black and silver finishes

WHAT IS CAMBRIDGE Audio playing at? The original 540C and 640C are superb CD players in their own right, so why risk turning them into a couple of turkeys by releasing new versions?

But we shouldn't fear the worst from a manufacturer that's on a roll like Cambridge Audio. It has revitalised and virtually reinvented these two models, kept the budget pricing, and produced a couple of outstanding new CD players.

Embarrassing more expensive kit

The 540C now performs on a higher level than the original. This disc-spinner is capable of unravelling tracks and revealing an excellent level of detail – it delivers music in an energetic and dynamic manner that gets your sonic juices flowing. The spacious and open sound allows the vocals and instruments in Radiohead's *High And Dry* to sound clear and uncluttered. As far as £200 CD players go, there's no doubt the 540C has lifted the bar to a new level that the competition can't match.

However, if you've got an extra 50 quid spare, it's worth checking out the 640C V2.0. It's such an accomplished player, that even some designs costing almost twice as much will struggle to cope with this calibre of performance.

Detail levels are exceptional for the money. So, too, are the quantity of dynamics and drive on offer, not to mention the muscle this player can flex-es. Spinning Naughty By Nature's classic

"If we could give products six stars, then these CD players would get them"

Uptown Anthem highlights the player's solid and authoritative character. The risqué vocals sound solid, full-bodied and natural. The punchy bassline is focused, direct and rhythm-driven, making an immensely pleasurable listen.

So how come they sound so good? Each player has slid under the surgeon's knife for a bit of expert tweakery. Aesthetically, the main chassis is identical to the original, highlighting the Azur's sturdy build and attractive styling. The front display can now be dimmed, Cambridge claiming this helps reduce electrical interference, so improving sound.

The most welcome external transformation has occurred with the new 'Navigator' remote control. Gone are the miniscule operationing buttons of the older remote, to be replaced by a more thumb-friendly navigational button. It's a far more responsive and user-friendly design – manufacturers of more expensive players could certainly learn a thing or two from it.

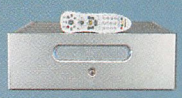
So what's under the bonnet?

The 540C features a new toroidal transformer, a single, upgraded 24-bit/192kHz DAC from Wolfson Microelectronics and also uses a new filter design to reduce unwanted noise and distortion. The 640C makes use of similar filtering, plus the new transformer, but also boasts not one, but two of the new Wolfson DACs – one for each channel. Normally the preserve of more expensive machines, these dual DACs

How do you tell if the player is a updated model? Look out for the 'version 2' badge on the back

CD PLAYER
Cyrus £650
Page 14

DVD/SACD PLAYER
Philips £400
Page 16

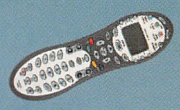


MEDIA CENTER PC
Uvem £3500
Page 18

SUBWOOFER
Velodyne £899
Page 18

AMPLIFIERS
Sony £1699
Page 22
Inca Design £700
Page 25
Arcam £1200
Page 25

PROJECTOR
Yamaha £8000
Page 22



ACCESSORIES
Atacama £400
Page 25
Archos £400
Page 30
Gefen £176
Page 30
Ixos £80
Page 30
Logitech £100
Page 30
Monster £20
Page 31
NevoSL £650
Page 31
Pinnacle £200
Page 31

TECH SPECS

AZUR 540C V2
DAC Wolfson WM8740 24-bit/ 192kHz-capable
FREQUENCY RESPONSE 20Hz-20kHz
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 7 x 43 x 31cm
WEIGHT 5kg

AZUR 640C V2
DACS 2 x Wolfson WM8740 24-bit/ 192kHz-capable
FREQUENCY RESPONSE 20Hz-20kHz
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 7 x 43 x 31cm
WEIGHT 5kg

have been arranged in a symmetrical formation: Cambridge claims this helps improve soundstaging and stereo imaging and, after hearing it in action, it's difficult to argue.

If we could give these players six stars we would. Each one offers so much quality for the money that if you're entering the budget hi-fi sector or just want an affordable upgrade, it's difficult to look past the V2 540C and 640C as recommendations. Bring on the amps...

JARGON BUSTER

DAC: Digital to analogue converters decode a CD's signal into a form your amp can use

NOW ADD THESE

SPEAKERS
WHARFEDALE DIAMOND 9.1
★★★★★
£180
These are the latest version of a classic loudspeaker. Wharfedale's Diamonds offers you fantastic value for money from their compact cabinets. Detail and dynamics for under £200.

AMPLIFIER
CAMBRIDGE AUDIO 540A/640A
★★★★★
£200/25
The matching amps for the Azur range are due a V2 upgrade soon. If you can't wait, the V1 540A and 640A remain awesome options.

SPEAKER CABLE
CHORD CARNIVAL SILVER BIWIRE
★★★★★
£9.50/m
Take advantage of the speakers' twin terminals to biwire your set-up, giving the sound an extra burst of freedom. A great touch!

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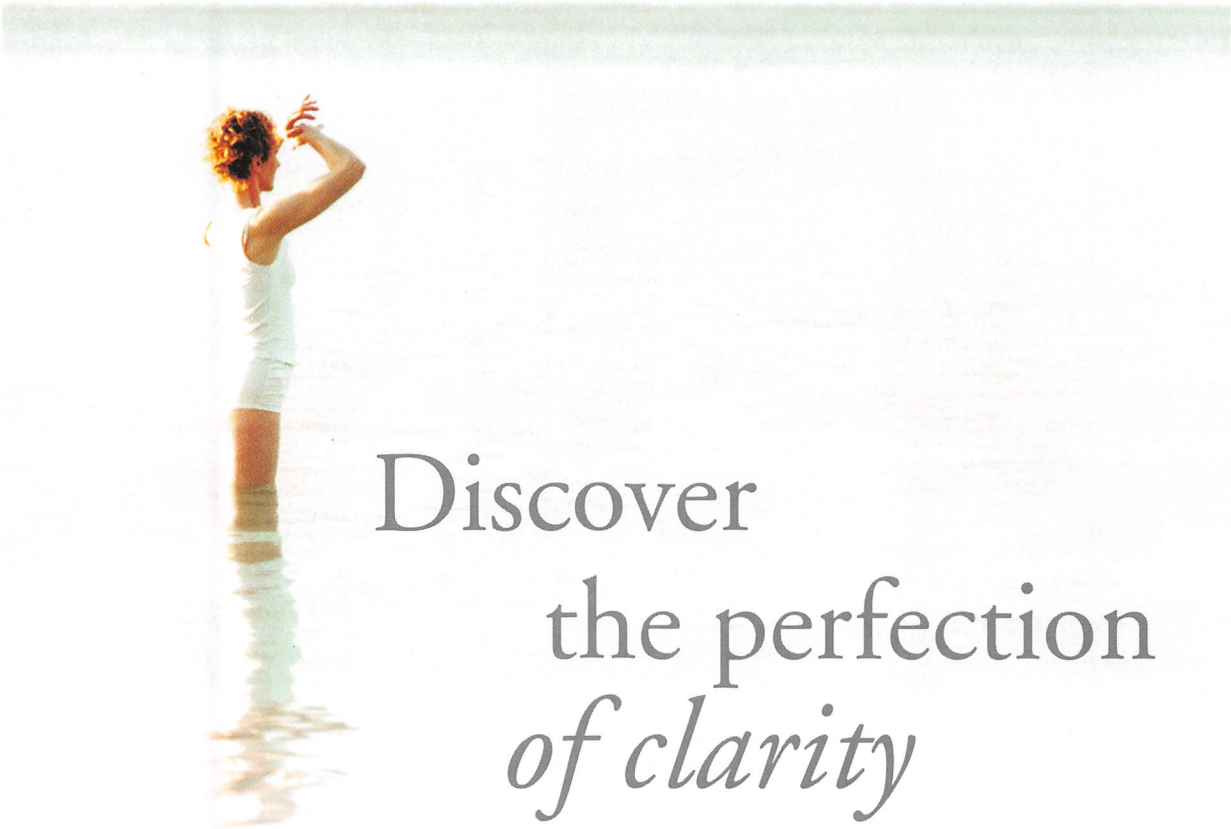
RANGE *SERIES*



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Park your Pod and party

iPOD DOCK
MONITOR AUDIO
i-deck
★★★★★
£ 250

An excellent any-room companion for your iPod, the i-deck has a sound that's vibrant and balanced, and has clout

FOR
Sound rivals leading micro systems; goes loud; charges and synchronises iPods; line-in handles other MP3 players and CD players; looks the part

AGAINST
No on-board volume control; top end can get a little spiky

VERDICT
A great-looking, great-sounding – and very loud – iPod docking kit. Stack 'em high, Monitor Audio

ARE YOU BORED of iPod speaker docks that look the part, but don't sound much louder than a pocket transistor? Well, so are we, so let's hear it for Monitor Audio's i-deck.

But before we talk sound, let's cover features. The main unit docks your iPod and its 18w per channel amp powers the supplied stereo speakers. The price includes a remote plus a selection of adapters to fit third- and fourth-generation iPods (including Minis) and unlike its biggest rival (Bose's SoundDock) the i-deck synchronises your iPod with your computer. A further useful, and non-Bose, feature is the 3.5mm mini-jack input for hooking up extra sources – so iPod Shuffles and other MP3 and CD portables can join in the fun.

The i-deck's neutral colour scheme should work well with most home interiors, while its lean-back angle should also help point sound upwards – we, sadly, accept that many of these systems won't come within a mile of speaker stands or a hi-fi rack, instead spending life on a low-level table, or even sitting on the floor (aagh!).

"The i-deck's sound is far more 'capable micro system' than 'capable computer speakers', and it goes incredibly loud"

However, where the i-deck really makes its mark is with its sound quality: this is the most convincing iPod docking speaker system we've heard yet, and its spacious sound is more 'capable micro system' than 'capable computer speakers'. And it goes loud – very loud.

Select David Holmes's riotous *Sick City* set, crank up the volume, and the i-deck's speakers maintain a remarkable degree of composure. Lower frequencies bounce along, midrange is easily discernable, and treble contains plenty of information. Switch to Iggy Pop's more relaxed *Motorcycle* and the emaciated one's distinctive voice sounds rich and realistic.

Not until you present Holst's *Jupiter* do you notice the i-deck's comparative lack of range. But this is only in competition with a pair of 'hi-fi' speakers, such as Wharfedale's £100 Diamond 9.0s.

Comparison with the Diamonds also confirms the i-deck suffers from slightly aggressive treble – the guitar on Iggy's *Motorcycle* is a bit sharp – but check our panel for tips on how to minimise this.

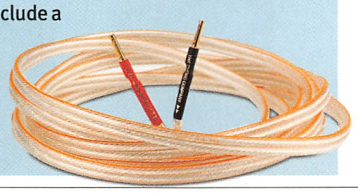
Our only other criticism is that the main unit doesn't make space for a volume control – lose the remote and you need to buy a replacement. That said, the solution is simple: don't lose it.

Overall, the i-deck is a very simple solution – and that's the way we like them. Especially when they perform as well as this.

KNOW HOW UPGRADES

Replace the supplied speaker cable – try some Chord Co. Carnival (£3/m) – and sound quality takes a lift. The i-deck also sounds better, though looks ugly, with the grilles off. Perhaps more realistically you could invest in speaker stands or attach the speakers to the wall. The speaker rears include a screw hole, though Monitor Audio doesn't yet supply specific fixings.

Placing the rear-ported monitors closer to the wall increases bass, though at the expense of a little definition. To improve dynamics and sweeten treble, when burning CDs, use a high bit rate – click into your iTunes Preferences and in the Importing menu select Apple Lossless.



ALSO CONSIDER ?

BOSE SOUNDDOCK
★★★★☆
£250
August 2005
No line-in for non-iPods, and doesn't speak to your computer, but sounds spacious and offers a neat and tidy solution

JBL ENCOUNTER
★★★★★
£99
October 2005
Doesn't sync with your computer, but delivers bags of boom for not much of your buck – see p12

TECH SPECS

FREQUENCY RESPONSE 75Hz-25KHz (-3dB)
SPEAKER SENSITIVITY 87dB
BASS/MIDRANGE 10cm driver
TWEETER 14mm ring dome
POWER 18w per channel
INPUTS 30-pin connector port for PC/Mac connection to iPod, 3.5mm auxiliary mini-jack
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 19x44x15cm

B&W Bowers & Wilkins

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION GROUP TEST WINNER

MT-30 and MT-20
What Hi-Fi? Sep 2005

MT-30
with PV1 subwoofer

> MINI THEATRE

Seeing a movie is one thing. Feeling it, getting swept away by it, is another. What you hear and how you hear it makes all the difference. When sound surrounds you, you're drawn deeper into the movie's highs and lows. B&W's stylish new Mini Theatre systems deliver movie sound with all the power and the presence to move you, without forcing you to move the furniture. Three configurations, each based around a different B&W subwoofer, offer alternatives to suit every size of private cinema.

The constant in each system is the compact M-1 satellite speaker, designed from scratch to provide lifelike cinematic sound, understated looks and instant usability. From its handpicked crossover componentry and tube-loaded tweeter to its high-strength, clamshell-style outer casing, the M-1 is a unified, integrated system in itself, optimised to deliver a natural, more organic sound to the movies you love.

T+44 (0)1903 221500 www.bwspeakers.com

MT-10
with AS1 subwoofer

MT-20
with AS2 subwoofer

32in LCD TV
LOEWE
CONCEPT L32
★★★★★
£ 1799

FOR
Elegant styling; comprehensive HD Ready specification; fine sound; good picture; value (for a Loewe)

AGAINST
Very little

VERDICT
A high-end TV 'name' at a very sensible price; the Concept L 32 has sky-high desirability, and it's a very solid performer, too

Loewe plays with the LCD big boys

LOEWE MANUFACTURES ONE of the finest and most sophisticated LCD TVs we've seen, the Spheros R37 Masterpiece (tested in May). Only one problem – it costs £5800. Ouch.

By contrast, the German firm's new £1799 Concept TV is pitched against Japan's biggest LCD names: the L 32 is a rival for sets from Hitachi, JVC, Panasonic, Sony and Toshiba – not Loewe's normal foes.

"We noticed certain sonic details we'd not heard from a TV before"

It looks and sounds like a Loewe, but it has a much more reasonable price tag

It's a surprising move, not least because the latest Loewe looks just as classy as its illustrious siblings.

The L 32 is a properly pukka Loewe in performance terms, too. While not as sophisticated as the Spheros, the HD Ready set still boasts 1366 x 768 resolution and plenty of inputs, including HDMI, component video and two Scarts. It also packs an integrated digital TV tuner, and – as ever with Loewe sets – its speaker set-up is a cut above most rivals. Bass weight is substantial, while detail retrieval is almost uncanny: several times, we noticed certain elements of a soundtrack we'd never heard from a TV before.

Even more crucially, the picture looks great. Colours are rich, details sharp and background noise kept commendably in check, even via TV broadcasts. Naturally, switching to DVD is a more rewarding exercise, although occasionally highlights some concerns about black definition – with darker movies, low-light details can be a little ill-defined.

But this shouldn't detract from what is, overall, a compelling TV proposition. The Concept L 32 is immensely attractive: it deserves to sell very well indeed.

ALSO CONSIDER ?

HITACHI 32LD7200
★★★★★
£1500
September 2005
Fine picture quality from this analogue-tuner set: HD Ready specification and elegant styling add to its appeal

JVC LT-32DS
★★★★★
£2000
September 2005
A stunning HD-ready set – an early favourite for next month's 32in LCD TV Supertest

DVD/HARD-DISK RECORDER
SONY RDR-HX710
★★★★★
£ 500

FOR
Vivid, colourful playback, coupled with faultless recording; couldn't be easier to use; Freeview tuner and 160GB capacity HDD

AGAINST
No HDMI or DVI video output

VERDICT
The '710 ticks all our current boxes for DVD recorders, and then some: as good a reason to jump on the DVD/HDD bandwagon as we have seen

Sony's DVD recorder does it all

SONY HAS ONLY gone and done it! After the RDR-HX500 and the RDR-HX510, this is the DVD recorder the Japanese giant hopes will rule them all. The old '500 had no hard-disk drive (HDD), while the '510 did, but lacked the '500's Freeview tuner. The '710 has both.

The HDD is upped to 160GB – enough to hold up 32-268 hours of TV, depending on the recording quality –while the tuner comes complete with a neat electronic programme guide, and progressive scan and dual-layer DVD+R disc compatability are here, too.

In terms of set-up and general use, as is now expected from Sony, this unit is as easy as 1-2-3, or any other commonly recognised 'easy things'. Bold, clear menus still retain a slickness, despite verging on 'I'm a bit stupid' simplicity.

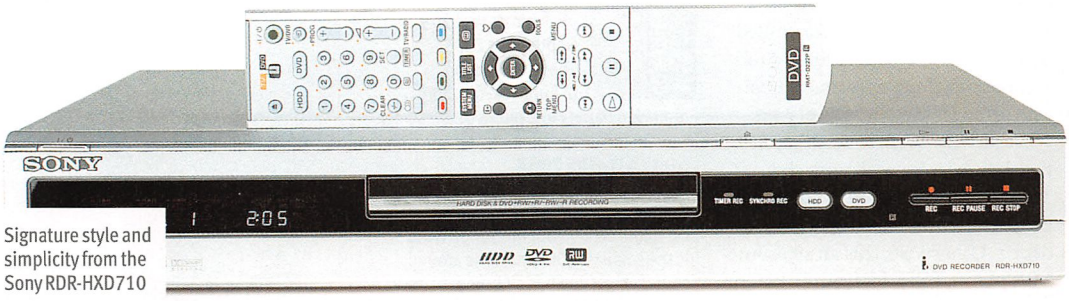
In terms of connectivity, there's component, Scart, S-Video and composite video socketry, but no all-digital DVI or HDMI – rather remiss for a £500 player, we feel.

"In the HQ mode the result is as faithful as a well-fed Weimaraner"

The '710 has plenty to live up to performance-wise, and happily it delivers. The built-in tuner is the match of the latest offered with high-end screens, giving a sharp, vivid and stable picture. Record to the HDD in the highest-quality mode, and the result is as faithful as a well-fed, just-walked Weimaraner. Move down a setting or four (Sony provides eight preset modes), and it still persists with spotless mimicking of the original. We'd steer clear of the bottom two modes – you should stick to HQ mode and delete or archive as you go along.

Burn to a disc – the '710 is happy with all but DVD-RAM – and results are just as impressive.

Play a standard DVD and all remains blemish-free – it performs superbly and provides all you need – apart from the £500 to buy it!



Signature style and simplicity from the Sony RDR-HXD710

ALSO CONSIDER ?

SONY RDR-HX510
★★★★★
£400
September 2005
If a Freeview tuner doesn't turn you on, this is the Sony to search out; offers an 80GB HDD and prog scan playback, too

TOSHIBA RD-XS34
★★★★★
£399
September 2005
Another superb device, especially if HDD space is a major concern – the Tosh boasts a 160GB capacity

PORTABLE
DAB/FM RADIO
PURE EVOKE-2XT
★★★★★
£ 150

FOR
Warm, room-filling sound that's especially effective with music; easy to use; good connectivity; rechargeable battery system

AGAINST
Speech radio not as crisp as some rivals

VERDICT
Cheaper rivals may be stacking up in supermarkets, but Pure's Evoke-2XT has the looks, features and performance to more than justify its premium price

Pure's boldness justified

Extra features and sockets for the same price are a bonus, while Pure's superb sound's here, too

WE WERE ANNOYED when the Evoke-2XT arrived, as Pure has slapped a WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION five-star logo on the packaging. Before we've reviewed it? Presumptuous!

That rating refers to the original Evoke-2 stereo DAB/FM radio, which like Pure's other portables

"Pure slapped a five-star logo on the packaging before we'd reviewed it"

has been given an 'XT' update, but with the price being kept the same.

New features include a timer/alarm, which adds to both the 2XT's kitchen and clock-radio credentials (if your bedside table can handle a beefy, 29 x 22 x 13cm box in maple or cherry finish). There's also a new USB socket, enabling software updates via your PC – which could be very useful with more DAB data services on their way. The USB sits alongside a line-in socket – ideal if you want to play your iPod via the Pure's speakers – and line out, digital out and headphone sockets.

The radio runs on mains or batteries, and there's a new option (£30) of a rechargeable battery that happily juices itself up when you're hooked to the mains, providing 15 hours of listening when you're not.

The sonics have also been tweaked, and there's no denying the Evoke-2XT's rich, room-filling sound – decent on FM but excellent on DAB music stations from Virgin Classic Rock to Classic FM. It sounds like you're listening to a much larger system, with bags more bass than rivals.

Push the volume way up and the Pure starts to lose the plot, but for everyday pleasures it's perfect – only on spoken-word radio does it lack some crispness. There's also no pause or rewind feature, which some of its price rivals do offer.

We shouldn't have fretted about the Evoke-2XT's packaging – this is a worthy five-star radio.

ALSO CONSIDER

ROBERTS GEMINI RD-11
★★★★★
£140
August 2005
This stereo DAB/FM portable can record up to 40 minutes of radio and excels with speech stations

PURE EVOKE-1XT
★★★★★
£100
October 2004
This baby bro' has a similar sound and style, but on a smaller, mono scale; DAB-only

Creative's Sleek has real polish

MP3 PLAYER
CREATIVE
ZEN SLEEK
★★★★★
£ 200

FOR
Delivers Creative's typically musical sound; very easy to use – for both machine and software; pretty damn dinky; decent earbuds

AGAINST
Battery life shorter than some rivals; exposed terminals could collect dirt and dust; it's a PC-only player

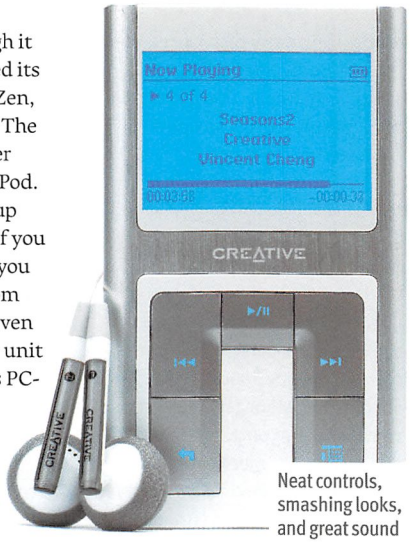
VERDICT
The Sleek joins Apple's iPod and Sony's NW-HD5 at the top of the MP3 Jukebox must-have list – a great player

LAST MONTH, WE reviewed the Creative Zen Touch, and though it received five stars, we criticised its cumbersome body. The latest Zen, however, has a body beautiful. The 157g Sleek is smaller and lighter than the Touch and the latest iPod.

This 20GB model can store up to 5000 MP3s at 128kbps, and if you exhaust your portable library, you can always listen to sounds from the Sleek's FM radio. You can even record from the radio, plus the unit acts a voice recorder. Creative's PC-only MediaSource software is good, as is the Sleek's thumb-activated control system.

Creative has a reputation for excellent-sounding portable players, and the Sleek delivers tunes with good bass, a natural midrange, and a controlled top-end. It's a rhythmic fellow, too – tunes nip along with an enthusiasm often lacking in MP3 players.

Negatives? Well, the battery life is 16 hours (compared with the Touch's 24) and the exposed sockets could collect unwanted pocket debris. Otherwise, this an awesome MP3 player, fully deserving a listen.



Neat controls, smashing looks, and great sound

ALSO CONSIDER

APPLE iPOD 20GB
★★★★★ £209
September 2005
The latest version of Apple's iPod offers improved battery life, plus a colour screen

SONY NW-HD5 20GB
★★★★★ £200
September 2005
No colour screen, but the Sony NW-HD5 is the smallest 20GB machine around, sounds great and has a 40-hour battery

JBL out of this world

MULTIMEDIA
SPEAKERS
JBL ENCOUNTER
★★★★★
£ 99

VERDICT
A neat-looking, great-sounding, and aggressively priced speaker system – works extremely well with desktop PCs, laptops, and portable players

JBL'S MULTIMEDIA SPEAKER system might look like a couple of invading aliens, plus their spaceship, but our Encounter proved entirely friendly.

The amp inside the subwoofer unit delivers 13 watts of power to each of its 19cm satellites, and has 34 watts for its personal bass duties. And it manages a remarkably big sound.

Plug the system into pretty much any source, and the sub ably backs up the sats to pack your room with music. The bass might be a dash loose and the treble a touch prickly, but the sound is much better than, say, TV or laptop speakers. The Encounter also beats any similarly priced iPod dock we've heard.

So if you're looking for a compact, distinctive, and effective speaker system, your search is over. The Encounter has landed.

With its alien-style satellites and a rocket-shaped sub/amp, the Encounter has bags of character

DAB/FM RADIO • MP3 PLAYER • MULTIMEDIA SPEAKERS • MULTICHANNEL SPEAKERS

It's Linear thinking in action

MULTICHANNEL SPEAKER PACKAGE
ACOUSTIC ENERGY LINEAR 5.1
★★★★☆
£1300

FOR
Powerful, authoritative sound; excellent dynamics; attractive design

AGAINST
Lacks subtlety of the top packages at this price

VERDICT
The Linear 5.1 is a lively and entertaining system, but not quite rounded enough to earn a five-star rating

ACOUSTIC ENERGY HAS indulged in a spot of plumbing, and plugged the gap between its £950 Evo 3B and its £1895 Aelite 5.1 speaker packages.

The new Linear 5.1 system consists of two Linear 1 bookshelf speakers (£250 per pair), two Linear 3 floorstanding speakers (£500 pair), a Linear Centre (£250) and a Linear subwoofer (£400).

It's a stylish package with some impressive design features. For example, the striking curved baffle isn't there simply to be admired – it's there to aid time alignment and off-axis performance (see below).

In terms of components, compared to the company's Evo 3B multichannel package, the Linear speakers feature new tweeters, upgraded driver units, plus a larger motor system. Higher-quality crossovers complete the changes.

"This package performs like it looks – big and bold. If you're a fan of action flicks, this could be the package for you"

The speaker cabinets are made using a sculpted polymer outer shell that's placed over a 25mm MDF sub-baffle (to help improve rigidity and reduce unwanted resonance) and are available in both piano black and piano rosewood high-gloss finishes. The system's 200w subwoofer is a sealed-cabinet design and hosts a 22cm downward-firing drive unit.

One of the most striking aspects of this package is the size of the centre channel. In consultation with our 'bigger is better' American cousins, AE has produced a cabinet that's an impressive 62cm wide. Consequently, a system like this warrants a large flatscreen TV, or even a projector screen to keep everything in proportion.

Sonically, the Linear set-up performs like it looks: big and bold. If you're a fan of action flicks or rock music, then this could be the package for you. It produces a powerful, gutsy and dynamic sound that gives an extremely promising first impression with music and movies. *Constantine* is delivered with vigour and venom – as Keanu Reeves passes through to hell, the speakers deliver the effects of the swirling debris crisply, and pick up the fine detail with ease.

Loves the rough and tumble

However, we'd like a touch more finesse for the money. When it comes to more subtle moments, it's not as capable as the class-leaders. For example, movie dialogue lacks the natural feel of the best systems.

The Linear package is a lively and entertaining speaker package. Its bold and brazen character will appeal to many, so the least you should do is give it an audition. Bold design and a big, brassy sound make this a system for those who like their sonic thrills by the bucketload

KNOW HOW SPEAKERS

ALL OF THE loudpeakers that make up this 'Linear' multichannel package have been designed to be time-aligned. By this we mean equalising the distance between the drive units and the listener, so the sound from each drive unit arrives at the listener at precisely the same time.

Acoustic Energy claims to have achieved this by recessing the tweeter back so its acoustic centre is in the same vertical plane as the midrange/bass driver.

ALSO CONSIDER

WHARFEDALE EVOLUTION CINEMA
★★★★☆
£1150
October 2003
Simply add a subwoofer and you've got a super system for use with movies and music

AUDIO PRO IMAGE 44
★★★★★
£1150
April 2005
A good-looking, well-made and highly accomplished speaker package

TECH SPECS

LINEAR 1
TYPE Two-way, reflex-loaded
BASS/MID DRIVER 13cm pressed alloy cone
HF DRIVER Pre-coated textile dome
FREQ RESPONSE 50Hz-28kHz
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 36 x 19 x 26cm
WEIGHT 7kg

LINEAR 3
TYPE Three-way, reflex-loaded
BASS DRIVER 16cm pressed alloy cone
BASS/MID DRIVER 13cm pressed alloy cone
HF DRIVER Pre-coated textile dome
FREQUENCY RESPONSE 40Hz-28kHz
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 90 x 24 x 27cm
WEIGHT 16kg

LINEAR CENTRE
TYPE Two-and-a-half way, reflex-loaded
BASS/MID DRIVER Two x 13cm pressed alloy cones
HF DRIVER Pre-coated textile dome
FREQUENCY RESPONSE 60Hz-28kHz
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 18 x 62 x 20cm
WEIGHT 16kg

LINEAR SUBWOOFER
TYPE Closed-box 200-watt active sub
DRIVER Downward-firing22cm pulp cone
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 50 x 43 x 39cm
WEIGHT 26kg

32IN CRT TV
PANASONIC
TX-32DTM1
★★★★★
£ 700

FOR
Crystal-clear images; excellent detail; impressive depth of field

AGAINST
Nothing at this price

VERDICT
CRT technology is still live and kicking in the form of Panasonic's latest outstanding television set

CRT flays flatscreen TVs for quality

WHILE FLATSCREEN TVs continue to roll out at a relentless rate, more conventional TV sets could soon become an endangered species. However, Panasonic remains committed to flying the CRT flag.

Well, with models like its new TX-32DTM1, we can see why. We've always maintained that in terms of picture quality, you can't beat a CRT TV – and viewing this iDTV Panasonic just reaffirms that belief.

The Panasonic's picture is simply sublime. There's no hint of noise or grain – the TX-32DTM1 produces clear and lucid images. Even the standard analogue picture startles

"The picture from the analogue tuner puts flatscreens to shame"

you with its brilliance, putting any flatscreen to shame. General levels of detail are superb and edge-definition is rock solid. The analogue picture is so good that switching to the digital tuner makes virtually no difference in terms of image quality. Only the extra channels set it apart.

To hook up a DVD player, you're limited to just two Scart sockets, but we're not complaining, such is the fabulous image quality.

The Panasonic extracts the smallest detail from Will Smith's facial features in *Hitch*, stubble included. The TX-32DTM1 produces a fabulous depth of field and realism. The colour balance is spot on, too: *Monsters Inc.* is reproduced with fabulously vibrant images.

The sound can seem a touch thin at times, but there's plenty of space given to voices and action.

Overall, the TX-32DTM1 offers exceptional value and an outstanding picture – for a big lad!

CRT TVs have one great disadvantage: size – if you don't mind that, they're excellent

ALSO CONSIDER

SONY KD-28DX200
★★★★★
£950
October 2004
Sony delivers the goods with this stylish digital TV: picture and sound performance of the utmost quality

TOSHIBA 32ZH46
★★★★½
£829
January 2004
This sleek (for a CRT obviously!) and capable television made a great impression on us – and there are bargains out there to be had

CD PLAYER
CYRUS
CD6s
★★★★★
£ 650

FOR
Excellent levels of detail; sweet mid-range; fine timing; good dynamics

AGAINST
Can sound a little forward in the top end if not partnered carefully; that's it

VERDICT
This is a worthy upgrade of last year's Award winner at no extra cost – if you have £650 to spend on a CD player, check out this baby

Cyrus adds an S – and lots of flair

HAVE YOU EVER heard of the saying 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it'? Well, the CD6 was so good it won an Award last year, but Cyrus hasn't rested on its laurels, upgrading it anyway.

Once a warming-up period has passed, you'll find the new CD6s is a definite improvement on its predecessor, and by quite a margin. The good aspects of the Cyrus are still present: it times well, and sounds energetic and easy to listen to. Our main gripe, the slightly forward treble, has been eliminated.

It might look exactly the same as the CD6, but the CD6s is an even better performer

It's also plain to hear that detail resolution is fantastic. Even compared to its predecessor, the CD6s reveals bags more detail, whether from classical pieces or more thundering affairs such as Royksopp's new set *The Awakening*.

This CD relies heavily on good timing, and the CD6s doesn't falter. Its even-handed approach allows music of all genres to flood through with ease and a good tempo. Things only get better for the Cyrus deck when vocal-orientated music is played. Saint Etienne's *Tales from Turnpike House* is riddled with vocal parts over intricate rhythms, and the CD6s delivers all with apparent ease. The vocals sound expressive and the separation

"Music of all genres floods through in an easy, rhythmic style"

between instruments is great. Compared to the CD6, the 6s has plenty of bass weight, which helps redress the original player's slightly lean sound and adds to the overall authority and scale.

One word of warning: don't put the CD6s on a steel or glass rack. If you do, it sounds too aggressive and the bass pales into insignificance.

However, match it carefully and the CD6s gives nothing but enjoyment by the bucketload. Though it wasn't broken, this is a fix of which we thoroughly approve.

ALSO CONSIDER

EXPOSURE 2010S
★★★★★
£600
April 2005
With great dynamics, sweet treble and belting bass, this should be on your shortlist

INCA DESIGN KATANA
★★★★★
£600
April 2005
The Katana is a fantastic player, combining the enviable talents of good detail, musicality, rich presentation and sublime build

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION

★★★★★

"..., the HDMI-P is a stunning product. The detail it gives you is awesome."
September 2005

HOME cinema

"..., the HDMI-P puts in a blistering performance."
July 2005

pure definition

Pure unadulterated data. That's all you want.

The **NEW** QUNEX HDMI-P Digital Interconnect from QED, with gold plated plug and connecting pins, oxygen free copper conductors and outstanding levels of screening – ensure that's all you get. Nothing added, nothing taken away.

Available in lengths from 1 to 15 metres, the QUNEX HDMI-P is just one of the new products that form the QED performance digital range.

QED – the optimum cable solution.

HDMI / DVI Adaptors

HDMI to DVI | HDMI to HDMI | DVI to HDMI

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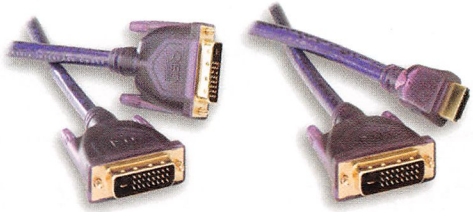
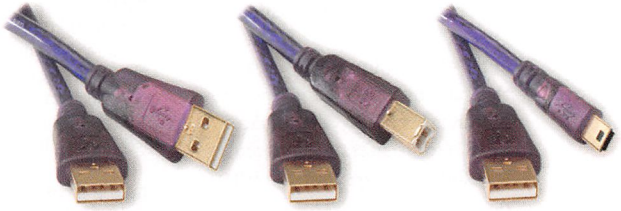


DVI cable | HDMI to DVI cable

NEW USB Cables



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inc female to female adaptor

USB Type A to USB Type B

USB Type A to USB Mini B

NEW IEEE1394 Cables

6pin to 6pin | 6pin to 4pin | 4pin to 4pin

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STEREO SPEAKERS • DVD/CD/SACD PLAYER

STEREO SPEAKERS
WHARFEDALE
DIAMOND 9.0
★★★★★
£ 100

Sparkling sound – yours for £100

At just 24cm high the 9.0s are never going to shake the room, but they have lots going for them

FOR

Great sound from the tiny cabinets; ideal partners for budget separates or upgrades for micro systems; great build; add three more and a sub for a great 5.1 system; flexible about position

AGAINST

Lack the scale of larger speakers

VERDICT

Looking for value compact stereo speakers? Look no further...

HANDS UP WHO recognises these speakers? Congratulations to those who said, "They're from the 2004 Award-winning compact speaker package." Yes, add the Diamond SW150 subwoofer – an Award-winner in its own right – to four Diamond 9.0s and a 9CC centre and you have the 9 HCP 5.1 system.

Since the range's launch way back in 1981, generations of Wharfedale offers a total of five finishes, including an all-silver finish to match the latest electronics and TV.

"With budget separates or a £200 micro system, they'll make you smile"

Either in free space or close to a rear wall – they're not fussy – the Diamonds deliver a admirably honest sound. Don't expect huge bass depth or definition – the speakers' small size, together with their price tag, prohibits that. But do expect an even tonal balance that never exaggerates the source material, plus a composed top end. This all helps the Wharfedales reign in unruly cheaper components, making the best of what you feed them.

We may have warned against big bass expectations, but play some challenging Nitin Sawhney – he's a man who likes an extra helping of lower frequencies – and the 9.0s present a tight and punchy presentation. They also deliver vocals with greater clarity and realism than possibly any other similarly priced speaker. Even more dynamically minded music, such as *Gladiator*'s OST, reveals the Diamond's limitations, but they avoid the horrid cabinet boom and treble screech of many budget monitors. Instead, they stay within their limits, presenting a really enjoyable sound.

If you have more money and space, the £180 Diamond 9.1s offer a more dynamic listen. However, if you're looking for a small, yet remarkably talented, £100 speaker, the 9.0s are the ones for you. With budget separates or a £200-ish micro system, they'll make you smile.

ALSO CONSIDER

MISSION M31i
★★★★★
£140
December 2004
More expensive than the Wharfedales, but the deeper cabinets deliver greater dynamics and bass depth

TANNOY FUSION 1
★★★★☆
£100
August 2004
Direct rivals for the Diamond 9.0s that work best with neutral to rich-sounding kit

DVD/CD/
SACD PLAYER
PHILIPS
DVP9000S
★★☆☆☆
£ 400

An HDMI output and compatibility with a large range of discs can't hide poor performance

Philips gets its sums wrong

FOR

Versatile disc player; smart-looking unit; easy to set up

AGAINST

Disappointing with SACDs, film and music – this player lacks poise, clarity and punch; even its HDMI performance is fairly underwhelming

VERDICT

Not good enough at this price level - despite the wealth of technology beneath the shell

THERE ARE TWO immediately obvious reasons why you might be enticed into buying this product. First, it has an HDMI output, allowing all-digital images. Second, it's a DVD player that can also play stereo and multichannel SACD (Super Audio CD) discs, as well as standard CDs.

However, the sleek, touch-button box also has a few secrets inside. The player uses Faroudja DCDi technology for both progressive scan processing and the built-in scaler. This means it's capable of displaying 720p and 1080i pictures. So we felt justified in expecting great things from a suitable display.

Sadly, we were far from blown away by the performance on show. Via component outputs, the picture shows a worrying lack of black detail, and introduces an unwelcome amount of grain.

Step up to HDMI and the picture does becomes more stable, but we would still expect better from this digital connection. Likewise we're left disappointed by Philips' DCDi technology. The sharper, smoother picture doesn't quite materialise, and we're still troubled by grain and the overall lack of detail, no matter whether we're feeding our screen a 720p or 1080i signal.

"The quality of picture isn't what we'd expect from a £400 DVD player"

Sonically – an area in which this DVD/CD/SACD player ought to excel – the Philips doesn't really flex its muscles, either. No matter whether it's DVD-Video, CD, or SACD (multichannel or stereo), the Philips always sounds rather narrow and lightweight. There's not the extra breadth to high-resolution sound, and it frequently sounds pedestrian and confused.

There isn't a wealth of direct competition for this player, but we think the Yamaha DVD-S1500 (right) offers better performance-per-pound, as does the cheaper Pioneer DV585A (see p52).

ALSO CONSIDER

YAMAHA DVD-S1500
★★★★☆
£400
December 2004
A solid universal player offering good depth of field and decent levels of detail

DENON 2910
★★★★★
£600
November 2004
Splash a bit more cash and a seriously good player can be yours. This was our 2004 Award winner and still cuts the mustard

music technology style

ARCAM solo

www.arcam.co.uk

BEST BUY HI-FI CHOICE magazine

GOLD AWARD

March 05 WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★

integrated high fidelity – pure and simple

New pieces of Silver are a treasure

STEREO SPEAKERS
MONITOR AUDIO SILVER RS1
★★★★★
£350

FOR
Good looking; well made; speedy, accurate sound; articulate and dynamic

AGAINST
Low end is not as razor-sharp as the very best rivals

VERDICT
An engaging listen from a decorative cabinet, the RS1s will intrigue all but the bassline mafia

MONITOR AUDIO'S SILVER speaker range has already impressed us, but it's facing one of its toughest battles yet: putting its new RS1 entry-level model up against the class-leading Quad 11L and Epos M5 designs.

The RS1s certainly don't lose out on looks: our review pair's walnut finish is smooth and lustrous, and the overall finish is well up to standard. A hefty running-in period is needed – our RS1s were left playing all weekend before their top-end excitability calmed – but the wait is well worth it.

"They're a fast, detailed and authoritative listen: it's a convincing sound"

Picture a vivid sound

Secured atop some decent stands, toed-in just a fraction and in less free space than rivals demand, the Monitor Audios paint a vivid picture. Playing Saint Etienne's *The Birdman of EC1*, the RS1s crack through the whimsy in fine style. They're a fast, detailed and author itative listen, with a convincing soundstage. Integration is first-rate, tempos are snappy but never hurried, and the overall sonic signature is one of mature, considered enthusiasm. Dynamic fluctuations present no problems: the RS1s are as happy to bellow as to whisper.

There's no shortage of low-end weight, either, with sufficient articulation to make even The Perceptionists's *What Have We Got To Lose?!?* bassline easy to follow. Relative to the class-leaders, the MAs don't muster quite the bite into the leading edges of bass notes. It's a healthy, bouncing bottom end that's always informative but may not have the sheer attack that hip-hop heads may demand. But in truth, this is a small criticism, pertinent only to a few potential purchasers.

Quad has been the default choice in this category for long enough. It's good to know that Monitor Audio, along with Epos, can now offer a persuasive alternative.

Another excellent addition to the Monitor Audio Silver speaker range

ALSO CONSIDER

QUAD 11L
★★★★★
£380
May 2004
Award-winning standards of sound and finish – a benchmark

EPOS M5
★★★★★
£350
February 2005
Homely looks, but amazing ability with music of all types

This powerful PC is no plod

MEDIA CENTER PC
UVEM CLASSIC 200/10000 RA
★★★★★
£3500

FOR
Outrageously good picture quality with HD and DVD content; fine sound; flexibility; value

AGAINST
Nada

VERDICT
The finest home cinema PC we know of, and a real rival to high-end DVD players

The Uvem looks more like a high-end DVD player than a PC

UVEM'S CLASSIC IS a vast multimedia hub, with up to 1200GB of storage for hundreds of films and thousands of music tracks. You can use this PC to both play and rip from your DVDs, or to store downloaded High Definition video sourced from the likes of *www.wmvhd.com*, and it includes a DVI output to maximise image quality with suitably equipped displays.

It's not the first time we've tested this powerful home cinema tool: we were hugely impressed by its performance, save for a worrying tendency to crash.

But Uvem's revised 200/10000 RA has fixed that particular weakness (it hasn't crashed once, and we use it rather a lot), and also includes useful sound and vision-boosting tweaks. Existing Uvem customers can upgrade to this spec for £500.

The 'R' element of its revised name refers to 'Renderless' Mode, which optimises the performance of the computer's graphics card, resulting in significantly improved image quality. The 'A' element, meanwhile, points to a new, upgraded sound card, and it also works a treat, endowing the Uvem with the weight and authority of a good high-end DVD player.

In other words, this is a stunning high-end Media Center PC, and one we'd recommend highly.

ALSO CONSIDER

ELONEX ARTISAN LX
★★★★★
October 2005 £999
Great value performer that offers substantial storage and decent picture and sound (see p74).

HI-GRADE DMS II
★★★★☆
April 2005 £1099
Not quite as impressive as the Elonex for picture and sound quality, and a little pricier. Not such a looker, either!

Big bass muscle from a small box

SUBWOOFER
VELODYNE SPL-1000R
★★★★★
£899

VERDICT
A small sub with plenty of muscle. Its automated EQ system is a clever touch, too

WANT A COMPACT subwoofer with plenty of thump? Velodyne's SPL-1000R is a prime candidate, with its 25cm long-throw driver and 1kW of power. That's right, 1000 watts.

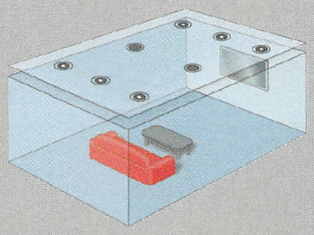
All that muscle means films like *Constantine* are delivered with huge authority and the menace in *Jaws*'s famous score is conveyed with skill.

The SPL-1000R does finesse, too, with the agility to sound tuneful when needed. Add remote control, and an automated EQ system that evens out excessive room effects, and you have something talented enough to worry the likes of B&W's Award-winning PV1.

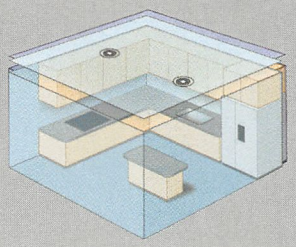
The SPL-1000R measures a fairly compact 32 x 31 x 36cm (HWD)

Boston
Boston Acoustics

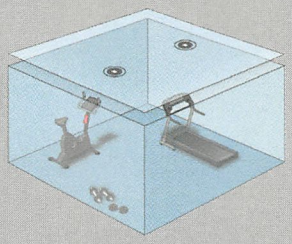
For any application



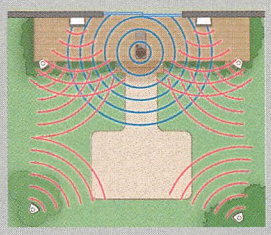
Home Cinema



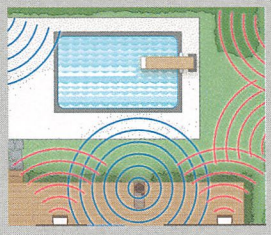
Kitchen



Gym



Patio



Pool

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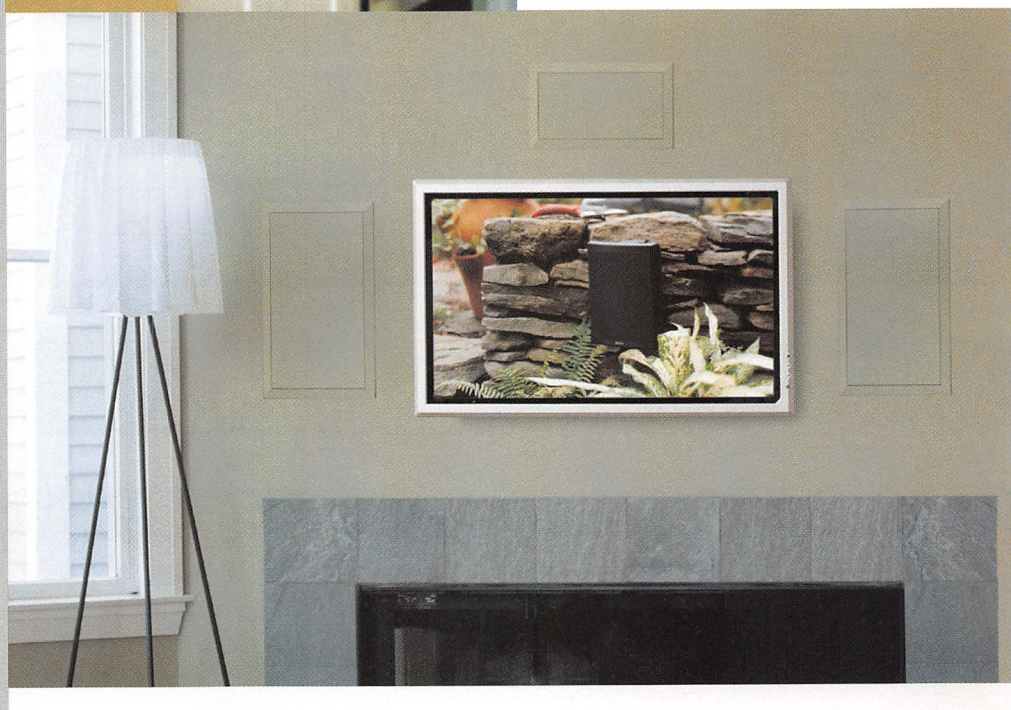

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CEDIA

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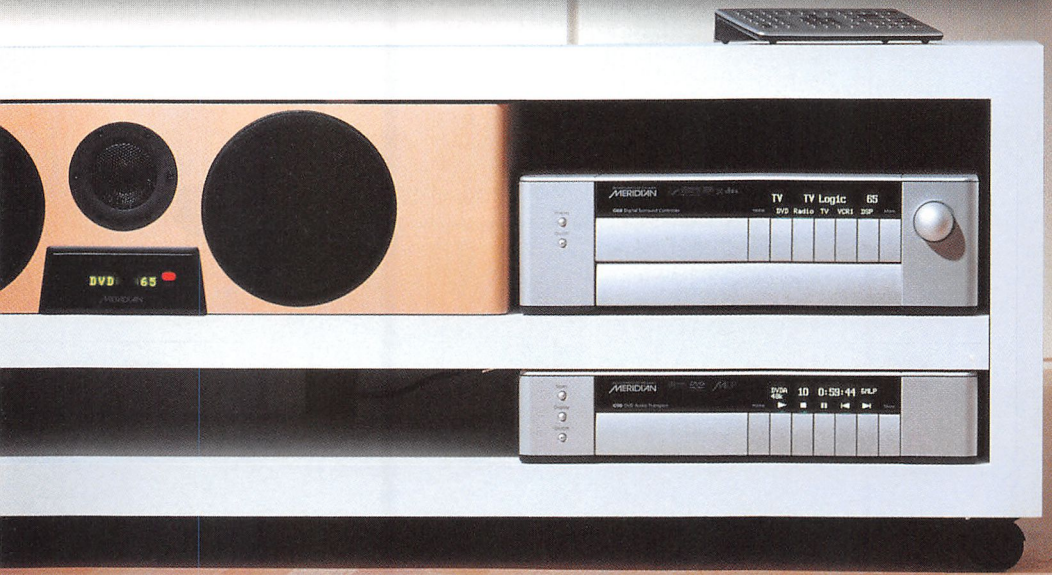
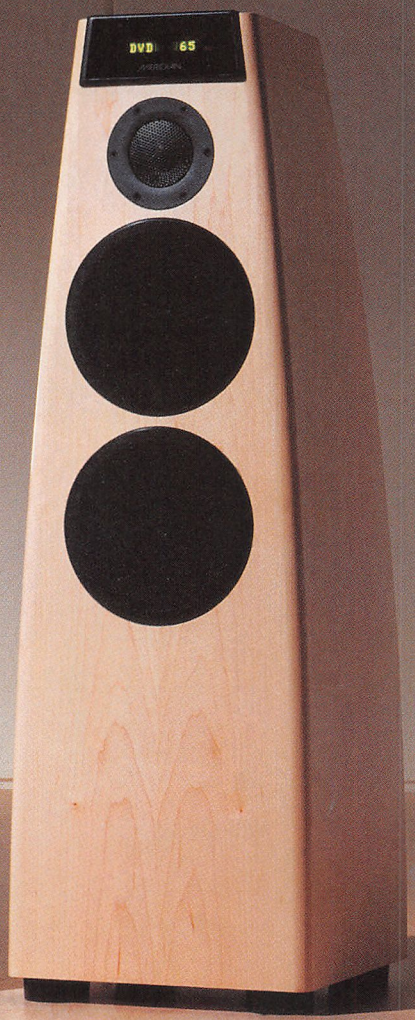
Meridian digital sound.
Faroudja digital images.
One source.

Faroudja, by Meridian.





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BOOTHROYD STUART
MERIDIAN
FAROUDJA

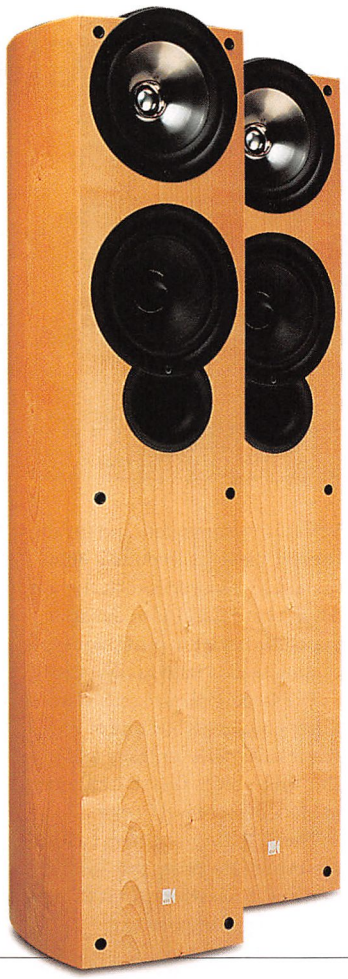
STEREO SPEAKERS
KEF iQ5
★★★★★
£ 400

FOR
Small size; great all-round performance; good bass authority for size

AGAINST
Take an age to run in; small base means they're easy to knock over

VERDICT
The iQ5s are the best pair of KEFs we've heard in years – we can't wait to hear the rest of the range

They don't take up much space, and they're flexible about where you position them



Bright start for KEF's new speaker range

AFTER A DAY'S run-in, we didn't think much of these KEFs. But, thorough chaps that we are, we gave the iQ5s another 24 hours, and came back to find they now had real dynamics.

These floorstanders are petite, standing just over 80cm high, but the combination of a Uni-Q mid-range and a dedicated bass driver

"They produce stunning scale and authority for loudspeakers this size"

produces stunning scale and authority for something this size. There's little sign of the speaker holding back even when playing demanding music such as Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* at neighbour-annoying levels. Surprisingly, these floorstanders remain refined and listenable under such strain.

The story is similarly positive when it comes to detail resolution and integration, too. KEF's engineers have struck a great balance here. Put the iQ5s at the end of a quality multi-thousand pound stereo set-up and they sing like little else at this price. Equally, if fronted by a budget home-cinema system, they won't complain and will continue to produce an eminently listenable and enjoyable sound.

They're not fussy about position either: anything from around 20cm from the back wall gives a decent tonal balance, and the Uni-Q driver's wide dispersion means that toe-in isn't critical. Biwiring is essential for the best results, though.

No speaker at this price level is flawless. The KEFs aren't as pure in the midrange as we'd like, and the otherwise-fine low-end could have a touch more grip. However, as a complete package they make a massively strong case. They're one of the few towers that can give equivalently priced standmounts a real scare.

ALSO CONSIDER

FOCAL CHORUS 714
★★★★★
£479
July 2004
They're stylish floorstanders that combine refinement with muscle better than most rivals

B&W DM602.5 S3
★★★★½
£400
May 2002
These B&Ws deliver a lot of detail, but lack a little drive and bass power

45in LCD TV
SHARP
LC-45GD1E
★★★★½
£ 5500

FOR
Scintillating performance with HD video; styling; flexibility

AGAINST
Reveals the resolution shortfalls of DVD and broadcast TV

VERDICT
A remarkable set in many ways, although it looks a little expensive next to its main plasma rivals

Sharp points to future of TV

IS PLASMA TECHNOLOGY doomed? Let's put it this way: Panasonic and Pioneer will argue otherwise, but in a size category previously dominated by plasma televisions, Philips, Toshiba and Sony now offer 42in LCD sets, and even larger models are on the way.

Sharp has also debuted a super-sized plasma-basher, this 45in LC-45GD1E. It offers sensationally high resolution: at 1920 x 1080, the Sharp provides over two million pixels across its screen – more than a million extra than Panasonic's 1024 x 768 TH-42PV500 plasma.

The devil's in the detail

More pixels means more potential for detail, and it also means the Sharp offers a 'native' fit for High Definition video recorded at either 1080i or 1080p quality.

It's no surprise, then, that the Sharp's picture looks stunning when fed with 1080i video from an Uvem home cinema PC, providing an extraordinary absence of noise and motion-smearing.

However, you do have to use video of this quality to really make the most of the Sharp. It still looks good with DVD and digital TV signals, but the colour balance isn't as satisfying, and you're also aware of more screen noise.

In fairness, that's to be expected: both broadcast television and DVD provide only 576 lines of video, so the Sharp's scaling has to work a lot harder to successfully 'address' all those pixels on its screen.

Cheaper, lower-resolution plasmas cope a little better with these comparatively lower-quality sources. Therefore, when combined with its price, that means the Sharp is best viewed as one for the connoisseur rather than an 'everyday' TV. For now, there are cheaper plasmas that might do better.

Great looks and a stunning spec, but the Sharp is a little too advanced and pricey for now

ALSO CONSIDER

PIONEER PDP-505XDE
★★★★★
£4000
August 2005
This 50in plasma costs £1500 less than the Sharp. Also HD-ready.

SIM2 DOMINO 55M
★★★★★
£4000
July 2005
This 55in rear-projection TV is immensely desirable: it produces superb film-like imagery from DVD and High-Def sources.

MULTICHANNEL RECEIVER
SONY
STR-DA7100ES
★★★☆☆
£ 1699

FOR
Clean sound, HDMI video upconversion

AGAINST
It doesn't actually sound that good

VERDICT
This Sony amp is packed with features, but its sound is too tame to inspire

Classy Sony sounds just too clinical

SONY HAS UPPED the digital ante with its new STR-DA7100ES. Aside from its digital amplification, it offers both FireWire digital audio inputs and upconversion of all your video sources to HDMI.

However, for such an overtly high-tech product, it's odd there's no auto set-up. Manual set-up does tend to give better results, though you'll have to put some effort into

"Voices lack expression, and so fail to exert the right emotional pull"

it. More of a problem is that the STR-DA7100ES has one of the most poorly conceived menu systems we've come across: it's difficult to navigate and hard to understand, even when you have the equally poor manual to hand. An elegant learning remote is supplied as standard, but it's not particularly easy to operate, either.

In use, presentation is balanced, and has the kind of sonic cleanliness we've come to expect from Sony. There's also a decent amount of detail, and an engulfing soundfield.

Power isn't in short supply, either. The latest version of Sony's S-Master Pro digital power amplification chucks out a whopping 170 watts per channel – and this receiver has seven of those. That's enough welly to deliver a sizeable dose of authority to any film.

So far so good, but this receiver falls short in a number of areas. It sounds clinical, failing to convey the natural warmth in recordings. Voices lack expression, and so fail to exert the right amount of emotional pull. More seriously, this amp doesn't have the kind of dynamic punch necessary to bring high-octane classics, such as *Jaws*, to life.

The same applies to music. Missy Elliot's multichannel mix of *4 My People* lacks drive and bite, while Eric Bibb's blues fails to shine due to a lack of low-level finesse.

The STR-DA7100ES isn't a bad performer. However, the competition is way too strong for it to make a meaningful impression.

The Sony looks a harmless beast, but it's not easy to either set up or operate

ALSO CONSIDER

PRIMARE SPA21
★★★★★
£2000
September 2005
This is a minimalist multichannel amplifier that sounds superb with both music and movies

ARCAM AVR300
★★★★★
£1300
August 2004
Getting on a bit in AV terms, but still a top-class contender that sounds great

PROJECTOR
YAMAHA
DPX-1200
★★★★☆
£ 8000

FOR
Excellent image quality; ease of use and set-up; quietness; flexibility

AGAINST
Bulky; seems expensive next to rivals

VERDICT
A worthwhile upgrade of an already impressive design, and a fine projector – but overpriced for the modern market

Yamaha's premium high-def picture

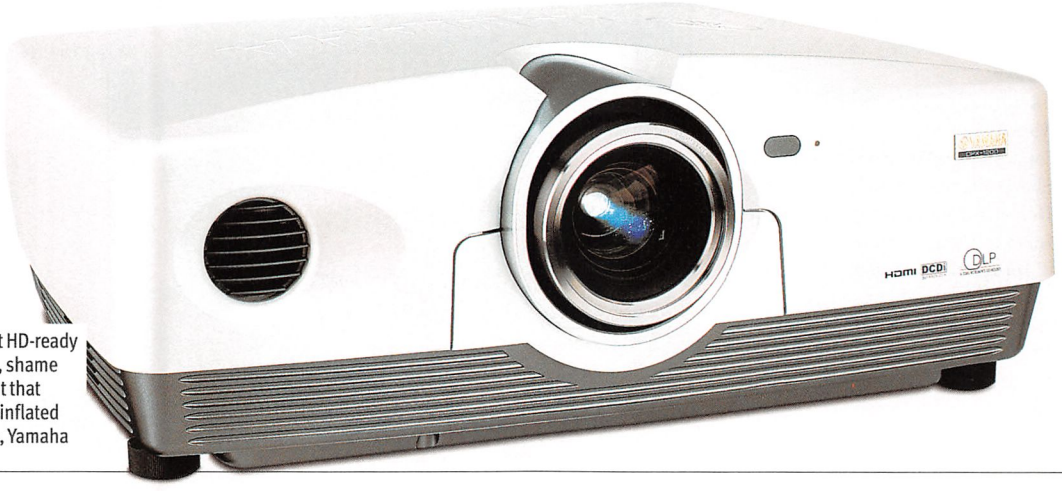
AT FIRST GLANCE, Yamaha's new projector looks remarkably like the forebears we've long used in our reference system. Its sizeable casing allows ample room for a clever fan air-ducting system that helps cut annoying noise. It also packs in a motorised optical assembly, a test-pattern generator, and superb connectivity – features we've come to appreciate over the years.

Most crucially, the '1200 adopts the latest version of the Texas Instruments 1280 x 720 chipset – aka DarkChip3 (DC3). Offering a claimed contrast ratio of 5000:1, it's the key weapon in the new model's arsenal, which also boasts a revised lens set-up that aims to improve image sharpness and accuracy.

Welcome to the dark side

As with other DC3 projectors we've seen, the Yamaha's image quality is richer and more lustrous than its forebear. It boasts deeper, denser blacks and punchier whites, and colours are more vibrant than before. It's a hugely impressive picture – and the Yamaha's other established virtues, from quietness and simplicity of operation to set-up flexibility, remain intact.

However, also like its forebears, the Yamaha costs £8000, while the SIM2 HT300 E (its deadliest rival) has just had its price slashed to £6000. The DPX-1200 is good, but that extra outlay is hard to justify.



Great HD-ready spec, shame about that over-inflated price, Yamaha

ALSO CONSIDER

SIM2 HT300 E
★★★★★
£6000
April 2005
Top performance from this compact, stylish projector: DC3-equipped, HD-Ready and capable of amazing results

SCREENPLAY 7210
★★★★★
£3999
July 2005
Recently cut to an even more brutally competitive price, this DC3-toting design is clearly the value option in its class

TANNOY®

★★★★★

"Movie soundtracks and multi-channel music get a wide-open soundstage that makes the competition sound woollier than a field of sheep." ***May 2005***

HOME CINEMA Choice

Speaker System of the Year - Home Cinema Choice Awards 2005 ***May 2005***

DIGITAL HOME GOLD AWARD

FOR: Styling, build, flexibility, thoughtful design – and stunning sound quality. AGAINST: Nothing. ***August 2005***

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION

★★★★★

HOME cinema Verdict ●●●●●

"The Tannoy system is one of the best-sounding packages of its kind, with plenty of punch for movie soundtracks and a smooth, involving presentation of music."

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a music system, with a passion for movies.

Elegant styling, simple operation and power to spare make the NAD L53 DVD/CD Receiver the perfect solution for those passionate about music and movies. And SRS technology delivers natural surround sound from just two speakers - the PSB Image B25s, described by Hi-fi World magazine as 'Seriously engineered loudspeakers with a satisfyingly engaging sound. Excellent value for money'.

Passionate? Well here's the good news. You get the lot for just £650!

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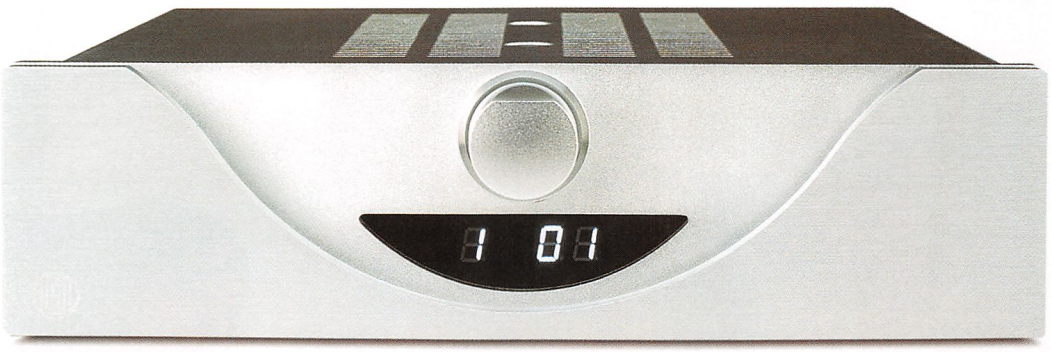
powered by passion NAD

STEREO AMPLIFIER
INCA DESIGN
TALON
★★★☆☆
£ 700

FOR
Individual look; detailed, expansive sound; lovely remote control

AGAINST
Nasty control knob; ponderous and lacklustre timing spoils your enjoyment

VERDICT
It's not without merit or charm, but the Talon is a fundamentally unengaging listen



The front panel is striking to say the least, but the sound lacks the drive to be inviting

Talon's not too talented

HARD ON THE heels of the Katana and Katana SE CD players (both of which we enjoyed mightily) comes this, Inca Design's first integrated amplifier. The 80 watts per channel output, pair of balanced inputs to

"The turgid Talon is less inclined to swing than Mary Whitehouse"

accompany four line-level inputs, and an agreeably unusual wooden remote handset are among the on-paper plus points. And the Talon shares the same unorthodox casing as its CD player siblings – you'll either love it or hate it.

The Talon is a confused and confusing device, both in terms of the way it sounds and the way it's designed. The fascia might not be to everybody's taste, but at least it's individual in a world of blandness.

Control-wise, there's a single, bold knob, which rotates for volume and clicks inward for input selection – and it feels and operates like a child's plaything. Volume variations take an uncomfortably long time to achieve, the 'big-print' digital display resolutely clicking at its own speed regardless of the urgency of your rotation. Changing the input involves pressing the button, which has a vague, wobbly action that inspires no confidence.

Sound is equally variable: the Inca serves up plenty of detail and establishes a good, wide soundstage, but invariably drags at the tempo of recordings – sprightly becomes lethargic, while stately becomes dirge. For all the Talon's musical neutrality, it's less inclined to swing than Mary Whitehouse.

There are positives here, but the sound is more often than not turgid, which is why we can't find more than three stars for the Talon.

ALSO CONSIDER ?

CYRUS 8vs
★★★★★
£850
October 2004
A little more expensive than the Talon but, boy, is it worth every extra penny – it's truly sparkling

NAIM NAIT 5i
★★★★★
£700
April 2004
This amp offers you enthusiasm, musicality and verve in super-solid casework

STEREO PREAMPLIFIER
ARCAM C31
★★★★☆
£ 1200

FOR
Sturdy build; great dynamic eloquence, bags of detail in this preamp's sound

AGAINST
Can't unify recordings; doesn't swing

VERDICT
With more coherence and confidence, it could lead the pack – but it's less musical than it should be

Arcam pleases head not heart

MOVE THE PREAMPLIFICATION section away from the baleful influence of the power amplifier and you reap sonic benefits. That's the theory, and that's why companies such as Arcam make products like the C31.

It's a usefully flexible device: the ability to specify different tone or volume settings for each input is brilliantly simple. And the inclusion of balanced XLR outputs as well as phono sockets guarantees the C31 can ingratiate itself into systems both modest and pricey.

The headphone output is driven by a dedicated amp section and the optional phono stage is a quality moving-magnet/moving-coil item. Just like Arcam's CD36 CD player, which we reviewed in *First Tests* last month, the C31 looks impressive on the page and in the flesh.

Unfortunately, the C31 shares some of the CD36's confused

"The Arcam C31 looks impressive on the page as well as in the flesh"

approach to music-making. There's no denying the C31's a detailed and insightful listen, with all sorts of poignant observations to make about Red House Painters's *New Jersey*. It has no fear of dynamic extremes and has grip and authority to spare. However, there's a constant and tangible lack of a sense of performance to music – a banal and shallow understanding of the emotional engine of a song.

For instance, there can be few more exuberant songs than Stevie Wonder's *Superstition*. Played via our reference Naim CD player and Krell power amp (neither of which is shy when it comes to the more libidinous aspects of music), the song is neutered of all swing or snap by the C31. Every scrap of information is transcribed, but without engaging the heart or feet.

For all its undoubted qualities, the C31 preamplifier can't forge ahead of its obvious rivals. It falls tantalisingly short of excellence.

The C31 has an excellent spec and solid build – but it falls short of the best of its rivals

ALSO CONSIDER ?

ROKSAN CASPIAN M-SERIES 1
★★★★★
£1250
September 2004
Has an agile, forceful and deft sound – and it's well constructed

CYRUS PreXvs
★★★★★
£1000
January 2005
Easily upgraded, the Cyrus pre is detailed, dynamic and cracking value

L-ite

Quad, manufacturers of high quality audio for over 70 years, introduce the Quad L-ite; a new Home Cinema experience that bridges the gap between high-end and affordable quality audio.

Although the L-ite is the first 5.1 channel compact cinema system from Quad, our passion for audio and advanced production methods have created a system with an articulate and musical performance exceeding that of most full size systems.

With the acoustic performance being derived from our multiple-award-winning L-series range of loudspeakers, you can be sure of stunning performance and superior build quality,. With a hand-finished high gloss, this system is a worthy addition to any home with a passion for quality audio.

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MULTICHANNEL SPEAKER PACKAGE • HI-FI RACK • DIGITAL TV TUNER/HD RECORDER

Pioneer with punch

MULTICHANNEL SPEAKER PACKAGE
PIONEER SV410
★★★★☆
£399

FOR
Dynamic, exciting sound; solid bass; decent levels of detail; great price

AGAINST
Can become cluttered when stretched; slightly harsh treble

VERDICT
Match with a budget DVD player and amp and this package will offer an impressive intro to home cinema that packs plenty of punch

PIONEER LOOKS TO have found a niche with this stylish, compact speaker package. The SV410 finds its foes in the form of home-cinema-in-a-box systems or larger, pricier speaker sets. So how does it compare?

Out of the box, it feels solid and looks smart, with four slimline satellites, a diminutive centre and a powered subwoofer. Stands are supplied, too, so it's an easy set-up.

Keanu Reeves's latest sci-fi action effort *Constantine* sees the Pioneer delivering the pulsating soundtrack with admirable control and excitement. The powered sub gives you extra control, which ensures excellent integration – and it also adds plenty of weight, while sounding tight and authoritative.

"This package could be the ideal purchase for those on a tight budget"

Using a classic test scene from *Master And Commander*, the SV410's dynamic ability comes to the fore. The loudspeakers pick up the smallest details in the near-silence just as well as they bolt into life when all hell breaks loose.

It's only a tendency to become flustered and lose clarity in the most challenging scenes that lets the package down. Also, use some form of support for the centre speaker (don't rest it on your TV) to ensure authority with speech.

Music finds the Pioneer's treble a little harsh, but we're almost forgetting this is only a £400 package. Well-made and designed, the SV410 looks and sounds the part. With stunning DVD players and multichannel amplifiers now so cheap, this speaker package could be the ideal purchase for home cinema fans on a tight budget.

Five speakers, an active sub and four stands – not bad for just £399

ALSO CONSIDER

WHARFEDALE DIAMOND 9 HCP
★★★★★
£500
Awards 2004
Best in class package in last year's Awards

SONY DAV-500ZF
★★★★★
£449
October 2005
A home cinema package for £449? See p68

Atacama racks up the stars

HI-FI RACK
ATACAMA EUROPA RACK
★★★★★
£400

FOR
Good looks; modular design; great overall sound; reasonable price

AGAINST
If you have fairly deep items of kit, try the Equinox range instead

VERDICT
Atacama has supplied another fantastic kit rack that will integrate beautifully in most homes and has the bonus of sounding great

Atacama's Europa is smaller than the Award-winning Equinox rack – each shelf here is 60 x 39cm, with extras costing £100

ATACAMA'S EQUINOX RANGE took last year's Accessories Award. Can the Europa – a deliberately more compact kit rack – repeat this success?

Atacama has an effective knack of combining form with function and the Europa carries on the family tradition, offering beautiful looks and stunning sonic capabilities at a reasonable price-point.

Okay, so £400 might not be everyone's idea of reasonable, but when you listen to the effect it can have on your hi-fi system, you realise it's a great-value upgrade.

To add to its appeal, the Europa is modular: you can add extra shelves (£100 each) as and when you expand your kit collection, so you won't outgrow the tack.

Unlike many glass/steel designs, the Europa doesn't have a hard top-end – in fact the treble is really expressive and doesn't pierce at high volumes. All styles of music are relayed with good tempo and balance. Bass response also pleases – the low-end is delivered with punch, depth and bags of detail.

If you're in the market for a new rack and you own standard-sized (rather than ultra-deep) kit, the Atacama Europa should definitely be on your shortlist.

ALSO CONSIDER

SOUNDSTYLE STATUS ST100
★★★★★
August 2004 £350
A class-leading equipment rack that will be a worthy long-term investment, but it's not expandable

CUSTOM DESIGN CONCEPT 400
★★★★★
August 2004 £320
Stunning build quality, together with fantastic sonic performance, make this a must for your shortlist

Your premium Freeview partner

DIGITAL TV TUNER/HD RECORDER
PANASONIC TU-CTH100
★★★★☆
£280

VERDICT
A solid all-round performer with good recording flexibility. But to gain a fifth star it needs a bigger hard-drive or a price reduction

A set-top box with many plus points, but it's just too pricey

IN A MARKET where Freeview set-top boxes are available for as little as £30, why would you spend £280 on this Panasonic design?

Well for a start, the TU-CTH100 offers a much better picture than many, with good detail levels and superb handling of fast-motion TV.

The Panasonic also has an 80GB hard-drive recorder, which makes good recordings from either of the unit's twin digital tuners – and allows you to pause live TV. Two tuners mean you can either (a) watch one channel while recording another, (b) record two channels at the same time, or c) record two channels and watch one of those that's recording.

This Panasonic is a fine product, with neat features, but we'd expect an even beefier spec at this price.

56in REAR PROJECTION TV
SAGEM AXIUM HD-D56
★★★★½
£ 2700

Get more TV inches for your money

SAGEM'S AXIUM HD-D56 is a 56in rear-projection television that manages to disguise its size fairly well, at least in pictures. But don't be fooled: this is a leviathan of a set – you need to sit at least 14ft away to view it at its best.

The Sagem employs DLP (Digital Light Processing) rear-projection based on the Texas Instruments 1280 x 720 HD2+ chipset, which – together with the set's DVI and component video inputs – means the Axium HD-D56 is HD Ready.

As with many large-screen TVs, the Sagem's performance with analogue television signals leaves a little to be desired. Colours can look rather approximate, and although careful calibration can bring about major improvements, the Sagem's picture seldom rivals the best plasma, LCD or CRT alternatives.

"This is a huge set – you need to sit at least 14ft away to see it at its best"

However, switch to DVD viewing – and even better, to high-definition video signals, fed in by our Uvem Media Center PC – and the Axium HD-D56 comes alive. For a rear-projection set, contrast performance is very good, and off-axis viewing is less problematic than with many similar designs.

Would we buy one? It depends on your needs. If you want a super-sized TV at a reasonable price, the Sagem has considerable merits. If, on the other hand, you want a big-gish telly that also boasts an excellent picture whatever you're watching, we'd probably opt for a 42in Panasonic plasma TV instead.

If you want the biggest TV your money can buy, the 56in Sagem could be for you

FOR
Huge picture for the price; elegant styling; well-equipped, and HD Ready; decent image quality with DVD and HD

AGAINST
Can disappoint with broadcast TV

VERDICT
Decent value and attractive to some, though not the last word in picture-quality-per-pound

ALSO CONSIDER

SAMSUNG SP50L7HX
★★★★★
£3500
March 2005
Big, beautiful and very capable, this remarkable 50in set belies its RPTV status with its slim, elegant cabinet design

PANASONIC TH-42PV500
★★★★★
£2500
July 2005
This stunning 42in plasma TV delivers a superb picture. It has an in-built digital TV tuner and is HD Ready, too

MULTICHANNEL SPEAKER PACKAGE
REVEL CONCERTA PACKAGE
★★★★½
£ 3100

Revel, Revel – we love you so!

IT'S A CLICHE that everything American is larger than it needs to be – remember, Uncle Sam gave us the iPod, hardly the most super-sized of devices. But Revel's new Concerta series surround package certainly conforms to stereotype: the company describes its F12 floorstanding front speakers as 'svelte', but at 107cm high, 25cm wide and 36cm deep, we'd say they're 'pretty darn huge'.

Naturally, the three-way F12s have huge weight and dramatic levels of bass. But as with each design in the Concerta series, they're also thoughtfully designed and sophisticated speakers. The C12 centre, for example, employs four drive units in a three-way array, while the S12 surrounds can be switched to run as dipoles, bipoles or monopoles. Conventional M12 stand-mounts complete the speaker line-up, and a 650W B12 active subwoofer mops up those low frequencies that otherwise have eluded the mighty F12s.

This Revel package could not be described as subtle in any sense of the word

To hear this meaty package at its best, a good run-in is essential: without it, the Concertas can sound uncompromisingly hard. But after a few days, that changes to a terrifically dynamic and articulate balance: fine details are crisply relayed, and the sense of effortless, almost disdainful might is intoxicating. If all you're accustomed to are sub/sat packages, you might even find it slightly shocking.

"They're thoughtfully designed and highly sophisticated speakers"

So why 'only' four stars? Simple: the F12s are a little leaden in the low-end, even when given plenty of space to breathe; they could also time better with music. In fact, sometimes they sound exactly how they look – a little too 'big' for many British homes. But otherwise, there's plenty to revel in here. Sorry...

FOR
Hugely powerful sound, with deep bass and forceful midrange; superb surround effects; lots of cabinet for your cash...

AGAINST
...which some might find a little daunting; can sound clumsy low down, especially with music

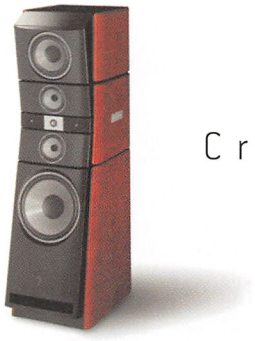
VERDICT
Powerful but cultured, the Concerta package demands a big room to work well. If you've got one, it's worth a look and listen

ALSO CONSIDER

B&W 704
★★★★★
£4000
Awards 2004
Stylish, beautifully articulate and effortlessly powerful. Not the cheapest, though

MISSION ELEGANTE E82
★★★★★
£3990
September 2004
Surprisingly compact but effortlessly potent, this elegant system is a 2004 Award-winner. Great with music as well as movies, too

SOUND QUALITY



Creating a new reference

Materials science is critical in the search for perfect sound. Our patented W cone technology possesses vital characteristics required for unrivalled performance. Extremely light with superb internal damping and twenty times the rigidity of conventional materials of similar mass. Flexible sandwich construction allows each cone to be manufactured with a linear response curve, removing the need to add correction within the filter network. So technology allows a better application, setting a new reference for what can be achieved.

FOCAL
the spirit of sound

Focal-JMlab UK - Jesson House - Tower Street - Coventry CV1 1JN - Tel. 0845 660 26 80 - info@focal-jmlab.co.uk

Seven great ways to spice up your video

Remote handsets to make life easier, wires to perk up your DVD player, adaptors to get you prepped and ready for the HD future – we've got the lot here. There's even something for less than £30...

REMOTE CONTROL
LOGITECH
HARMONY H655
★★★★★
£ 100

VERDICT

The Harmony H655 is a superb learning remote control. You set it up using your PC or Mac, and the brilliant set-up software makes the configuration process a breeze. It even allows for simple 'macro' functions, so you can turn on several devices at the push of a single button.

"The Harmony's brilliant set-up software makes the configuration process a breeze"

TOUCHSCREEN
REMOTE CONTROL
NEVOSL
★★★★★
£ 650

VERDICT

If the Harmony is so good, why spend tons more on a NevoSL? Simple: this amazing device is more PC than remote, running on Windows CE. It provides Wi-Fi control (and can drive a multiroom system) and boasts a huge IR database for hordes of audio/video devices.

HDMI CABLE
IXOS
XHT458
★★★★★
£ 80

VERDICT

Undoubtedly one of the smartest cables to grace these pages in many a moon, the IXOS is also a solid performer. It's claimed to be capable of coping with 1080p video (currently rarer than a rare thing) – but even with 'lower-quality' 720p and 576p signals, image quality is great.

REMOTE CONTROLS • HDMI CABLE & ADAPTER • DIGITAL MEDIA PLAYERS • SCREEN CLEANER

PORTABLE DIGITAL MEDIA PLAYER
ARCHOS AV700
★★★★★
£ 400

VERDICT

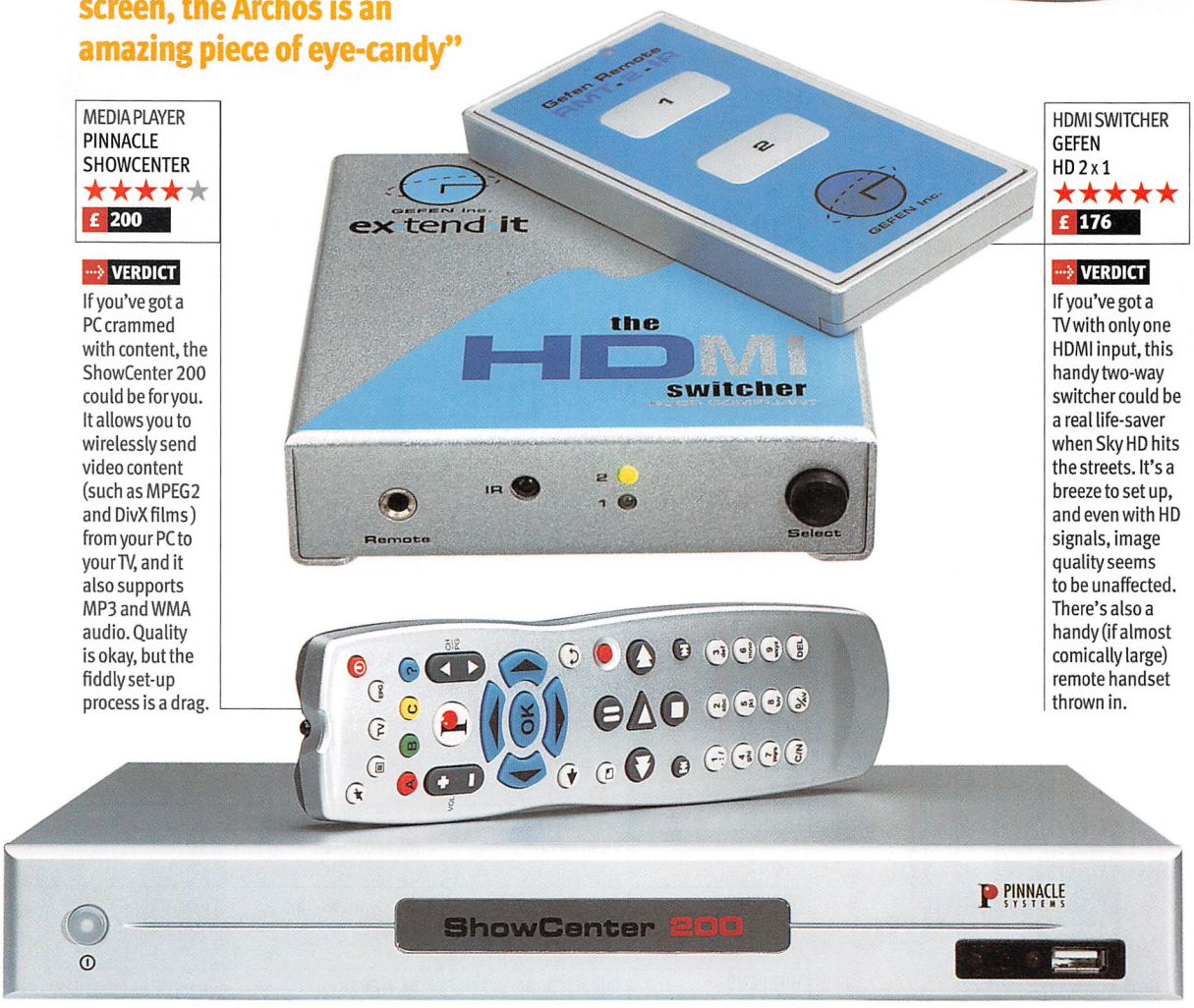
The Archos is an amazing piece of techno eye-candy. With its 7in colour screen and 40GB hard disk, it's a digital party in your pocket: you can store MP3 audio, DivX and MPEG-4 video (up to 160 hours is possible) and much more. Video quality is good, though contrast suffers if you view off-axis.

"With its 7in colour screen, the Archos is an amazing piece of eye-candy"

MEDIA PLAYER
PINNACLE SHOWCENTER
★★★★☆
£ 200

VERDICT

If you've got a PC crammed with content, the ShowCenter 200 could be for you. It allows you to wirelessly send video content (such as MPEG2 and DivX films) from your PC to your TV, and it also supports MP3 and WMA audio. Quality is okay, but the fiddly set-up process is a drag.



HDMI SWITCHER
GEFEN
HD 2 x 1
★★★★★
£ 176

VERDICT

If you've got a TV with only one HDMI input, this handy two-way switcher could be a real life-saver when Sky HD hits the streets. It's a breeze to set up, and even with HD signals, image quality seems to be unaffected. There's also a handy (if almost comically large) remote handset thrown in.

SCREEN CLEANER
MONSTER
SCREENCLEAN
★★★★☆
£ 20

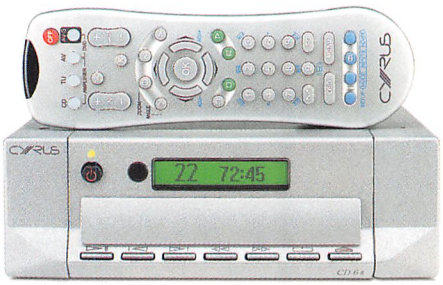
VERDICT

Designed to safely clean LCD, plasma and CRT TV screens, the ScreenClean works superbly – our reference plasma TV looks appreciably better after a good wipe, and there's no trace of any smears. A fairly cheap video upgrade, then – yet at the same time, it seems a little costly for what it is.

Best buys

10/2005

Just starting on the road to your first cinema or hi-fi system? Here's our guide to **what you'll need**, using the hottest kit you can buy



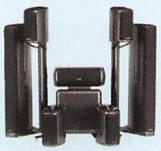
NEW ENTRY "If you're not going forward, you're standing still" It's said about football teams, and we reckon it's equally true for hi-fi. That's why Cyrus has upgraded its Award-winning CD6 CD player. The CD6s offers stunning timing and dynamics (see p14).

NEW ENTRY Monitor Audio's i-deck didn't arrive in time for our comprehensive iPod dock *Supertest* back in August, but now we've had a chance to hear it, we're smitten. We review this £250 system on p9.

NEW ENTRY We've given a few home cinema packages a hard time in the past – mainly because they were rubbish! That's emphatically not the case with Sony's £449 DAV-500ZF: great build, packed with features, and it delivers superb sound and pictures. See p68 for all the facts.

HOME CINEMA ESSENTIALS

WELCOME TO THE very best movie kit money can buy – whatever your budget. Whether you're after a whole new system or just one component, here are the building blocks for premium performance

£	DVD PLAYERS	RECEIVERS	SPEAKERS
BUDGET SYSTEM DVD player £99 Multichannel receiver £330 Speaker package £500 Television £1600 **£2529**	 TOSHIBA SD-350E ★★★★★ £ 99 Though the performance via HDMI isn't what it might be, the picture quality via component is unbelievable for £99.	 DENON AVR-1906 ★★★★★ £ 330 The successor to last year's Award-winner, this is another superb home-cinema receiver from the masters, Denon.	 WHARFEDALE DIAMOND 9 HCP ★★★★★ £ 500 One of last year's Award-winners. Its traditional looks combine with sensational performance
MIDRANGE SYSTEM DVD player £600 Multichannel receiver £1000 Speaker package £1930 Television £2500 **£6030**	 DENON DVD-2910 ★★★★★ £ 600 Plays just about every music and movie disc format incredibly well. The picture via its HDMI socket is amazingly rich	 ARCAM AVR250 ★★★★★ £ 1000 This Award-winner powers out both music and movies in a detailed, definite way. All of that, and it's British, too...	 QUAD L SERIES ★★★★★ £ 1930 Currently Product of the Year, and it's easy to see and hear why: it looks and sounds classy and is an excellent investment
HIGH-END SYSTEM DVD player £1000 Multichannel receiver £1300 Speaker package £3990 Projector £3999 **£10,289**	 ARCAM DV79 ★★★★★ £ 1000 A world-class DVD player with a cracking picture – especially via HDMI. Also plays CDs incredibly well. A superb all-rounder	 ARCAM AVR300 ★★★★★ £ 1300 For a system that excels with music and movie sounds the AVR300 is a must. Stunning steering and stereo from one box	 MISSION ELEGANTE e82 ★★★★★ £ 3990 Sleek and curvaceous with a similarly attractive sound – these Missions are our favourite package for music and movies

HOME CINEMA OPTIONS

£	DIGITAL RECORDERS	COMPACT SPEAKERS	FULL-SIZE SPEAKERS
BUDGET	Digifusion FVRT100 £170	Wharfedale Diamond 9 HCP £500	Epos ELS3 5.1 £956
MIDRANGE	Sony RDR-GX510 £400	B&W MT20 £975	Quad L Series £1929
HIGH-END	Sony RDR-HX900 £600	ProAc Response Hexa 5.1 £2496	Mission Elegante e82 £3990

£	PROJECTORS	SUBWOOFERS	VIDEO CABLES
BUDGET	ScreenPlay 4805 £850	Wharfedale Diamond SW150 £250	QED P2110 (Scart) £30
MIDRANGE	ScreenPlay 5700 £2000	Velodyne CHT-12R £469	QED QUNEX P-CV1 (component) £45
HIGH-END	SIM2 HT 300 E £6000	B&W PV1 £950	Chord Silver Plus HDMI £80

DISPLAYS

PANASONIC TX26-LXD500

★★★★★

£ 1600

This 26in LCD won our latest TV *Supertest* due to its superb styling, magnificent ability and affordability. A winner!

PANASONIC TH-42PV500

★★★★★

£ 2500

This stunning 42in plasma gives a you stupendous picture and it's HD Ready, so it's futureproof, too

SCREENPLAY 7210

★★★★★

£ 3999

The successor to last year's Award-winner delivers even better picture performance – well worth the money

NEW!

PURE EVOKE-2 XT

At £150, this isn't the cheapest DAB radio on the market, but it's certainly one of the best

ALL IN ONE BOX

Sony DAV-500ZF £449

Sony DAV-SR4W £750

KEF KIT 100 £1200

SAVVY SHOPPER

1 Get smart

Use our tests and Buyer's Guide to learn more about the products and technologies that can boost your sound and vision. It pays to be spec-savvy: you'll buy better kit for your money. Set a rough budget, too

2 Try before you buy

Make sure your planned purchases meet your exact needs: arrange to audition them in a retailer's demo room or during a home trial, not on the shop floor when you can't get to know them

BUYER'S GUIDE £

3 Use your own discs to compare kit

Improving your system is about getting more from the music and movies you love, and spinning your favourite DVDs and CDs will help you see and hear how individual components or systems compare

Every verdict you need – p91

4 Value is about more than price

Search around and compare prices from a range of suppliers, but always consider service and support as part of the package – will the retailer be there to help you?

"Dali's Ikon 6 speakers just sound 'right': not always perfect, but they seem to focus on your music's basic message"

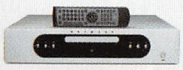
RATINGS EXPLAINED

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION's world-respected star ratings are awarded on a performance-per-pound basis: it's not enough for a product to be great, it's got to be great-value, too. Five-star ratings are awarded to the class-leaders, but four-star products are also well worth considering – they might not have the all-round ability of the very best, but they're still superior products and could be better for your system

★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Don't bother

HI-FI ESSENTIALS

MAKE THE MOST of your music with our supreme selection of hi-fi systems and separates. Our three set-ups below help you build a core CD system, to which you can add any option – from vinyl to DAB to MP3

£	CD PLAYERS	AMPLIFIER	SPEAKERS
BUDGET SYSTEM CD player £250 Amplifier £250 Speakers £180 **£680**	 CAMBRIDGE AZUR 640C MkII ★★★★★ £ 250 Cambridge Audio's Azur range is classy hi-fi on a budget, as this excellent player shows. Amazing!	 CAMBRIDGE AZUR 640A ★★★★★ £ 250 Continuing the Azur success story is this perfect partnering amp. Whatever music you love, it brings it to life	 WHARFEDALE DIAMOND 9.1 ★★★★★ £ 180 Our current Speaker Product of the Year – and one of the best hi-fi bargains around
MIDRANGE SYSTEM CD player £650 Amplifier £499 Speakers £450 **£1599**	 CYRUS CD6s ★★★★★ £ 650 The Award-winning CD6 gets a valuable 's' upgrade, giving it even greater dynamic range and spot-on timing	 ROTEL RA-03 ★★★★★ £ 499 The Rotel's dynamic performance and superb build quality would not be out of place on a pricier stereo amp	 EPOS M12.2 ★★★★★ £ 450 These Epos speakers are the latest version of a classic design – they're a great pair to live with
HIGH-END SYSTEM CD player £1500 Amplifier £1500 Speakers £1095 **£4095**	 PRIMARE D31 ★★★★★ £ 1500 Winner of our latest CD player *Supertest*, the D31 hits the spot in all the right places with its detailed, forceful sound.	 PRIMARE I30 ★★★★★ £ 1500 Detail, dynamics and timing are all there in abundance, and it delivers subtleties with absolute aplomb.	 SPENDOR S5e ★★★★★ £ 1095 Like the Cyrus pairing, these Spendors are more compact than most, yet lose nothing in terms of big-scale performance

HI-FI OPTIONS

£	TURNTABLES	TUNERS	SYSTEMS
BUDGET	Pro-ject Debut III £130	Denon TU-260L MkII (analogue) £130	Goodmans 1104 DAB £90
MIDRANGE	Clearaudio Emotion £655	Sony ST-SDB900 (digital and analogue) £250	Onkyo CR505DAB £220
HIGH-END	Wilson Benesch Full Circle £2100	Densen Beat B800 (FM only) £850	Arcam Solo £1000

£	MP3	HEADPHONES	CABLES
BUDGET	Apple iPod Shuffle FROM £69	Sennheiser PX100 £30	Chord Carnival Silver (speaker) £5.50/m
MIDRANGE	Apple iPod Mini FROM £139	Beyerdynamic DTX900 £65	van den Hul The Name (interconnect) £40
HIGH-END	Apple iPod 20GB £209	Grado SR325i £310	Russ Andrews Classic Powerkord (mains) £75

GO GET CUBED
Spruce up your home computer with the funky Cubite Speaker (£25). Check out WWW.GADGETER.COM for more information.

SCREENPLAY SLASHER
On the lookout for a new projector? Screenplay has reduced the prices of a couple of its top models. The 7205 is down to £2999 from £3500, while the 7210 is now £3999, down from £4500.

ALL-IN-ONE MOVIES!
Optoma's MovieTime is a portable projector with its very own integrated DVD player. The MovieTime is available for £849 – we'll run an exclusive FIRST TEST next issue.

IPOD ARMOUR CASE
Adrenaline junkies take note: Matias's iPod case protects your player in an aluminium and foam jacket. It's available with lots of other cases at WWW.APPLE.COM/UK

CREATIVE TRAVEL
If your lonely MP3 player needs a partner, then take a look at Creative's £50 TravelSound 400 portable speakers.

What's new?

LATEST PRODUCTS **INSIDE INFO**

Bargain alert! Alba launches £100 DVD recorder

HOW DO YOU fancy a DVD recorder for under £100? Perhaps a £60 digital TV receiver no bigger than a Scart plug tickles your fancy? Both products feature in a massive new range from the Alba/Bush/Goodmans conglomerate.

The Alba RDVD1001 £99.99 DVD recorder is in the shops now, while Bush's Idaptor is the world's first-ever digital TV Scart adaptor. The £60 unit simply plugs into the back of your TV, allowing you to access Freeview's digital TV and radio channels. We'll review the Idaptor next month.

Other highlights include a £1200 42in plasma from Goodmans, plus new MP3 jukeboxes from Ministry of Sound. The MOSMP080 (pictured right) looks especially appealing, so keep your eyes peeled for a *First Test* soon.

Finally, Bush's idrop range offers 128MB MP3 players for kids. They come preloaded with children's stories and at *www.idropsuk.co.uk* you can downloads more. Sounds Santatastic to us!

Ministry of Sound's new jukebox looks the businesss

COMING SOON...

5TH SEPTEMBER

Two discs of dressing-gown action in the form of THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY DVD. The double-disc set promises plenty of 'making of...' and deleted scene extras, plus Sing A Long So Long and Thanks for All The Fish...

19TH SEPTEMBER

ROBOTS is the latest animated movie effort from the director behind ICE AGE, and gets an impossibly quick DVD release. The now prerequisite – but still reliably amusing – animated bloopers should make it more than just for kids.

26TH SEPT

Details on the UK DVD remain sketchy, but the genuinely original SIN CITY is worth having in the collection regardless. In fact we've already bagged the Region 1 (US) version – complete with DTS sound – out now...

HI-FI

DENON LANDS A NEW TUNER

Looking to follow in the footsteps of its superb TU-260L MK II analogue model, Denon's new TU-1800DAB will receive DAB, FM and AM broadcasts. A two-line dot-matrix display will show RDS information for no fewer than 100 station presets. The TU-1800DAB is available now for £250 and you can opt for either a silver or black finish. We'll be testing it very soon, too...

HI-FI

MUSIC UTOPIA – CHEAPER THAN YOU THINK?

If you want a flavour of Focal's flagship Utopia speaker range but can't quite stretch the wallet that far, check out the company's new Electra range. The Electra 1007Be (a £2299 standmount) and 1027Be (a £3999 floorstander) share many features with the Utopia range, including Beryllium tweeters. A sneak preview listen also demonstrated a similar room-filling sonic style.

Meanwhile, Focal's existing Electra range is replaced by the new Profile 900 line-up, which includes everything from £1999-£2799 floorstander and £1399 standmount stereo options to a centre channel, subwoofer and in-wall models, plus sleek matching stands.

Both ranges are due in shops imminently – and we expect to get our hands on review samples even sooner!

Focal's new Profile 900 range looks rather fetching, we think you'll agree

See the latest kit at our Show!

SKY HAS JOINED the ever-growing list of exhibitors at the WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION Show 2005. The satellite broadcaster has just unveiled its new High-Def digibox (see below), and you can get answers to all your HDTV questions on its stand. Additionally, the *What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision* team will there in force. Visit our stand to gawp at our gallery of the year's best kit, or to get free hi-fi, home cinema and MP3 buying advice. We'll also be putting on a great demonstration: we're set to wow you with big-screen Hi-Def. Tickets to the show cost £10 in advance and £12 on the door, so call 0870 161 2128 to book your place. Check out *www.whathifishow.co.uk*, too!

WHO'LL BE THERE...

NOVOTEL LONDON WEST 4-6 NOVEMBER 2005

ACOUSTIC ENERGY
ANTHONY GALLO
ARCAM
ARCHOS
AUDICA
CAMBRIDGE AUDIO
CRANE AUDIO
CREATIVE LABS
CREEK AUDIO
CSE
CYRUS ELECTRONICS
DALI
DENON
ECOSSE
EPSON UK
EXPOSURE
FUJITSU
GIZMONDO
HENLEY DESIGNS LTD
INTERNATIONAL
AUDIO GROUP
IRIVER
KEF
NAIM AUDIO
NEAT ACOUSTICS
NOKIA
PATH GROUP
PHILIPS
PIONEER
PURE DIGITAL
SIEMENS
SKY
MOBILE
SIM2
SONY
STILEXO INDUSTRIAL
UK LTD
TEAC
THE CHORD
COMPANY
TOSHIBA
TOTEM SPEAKERS
VIVID SPEAKERS
WHARFEDALE
WILSON BENESCH
...AND MANY MORE

The 2006 Sky HD box looks great, and should offer superb pictures

SKY'S HIGH-DEF RECEIVER BREAKS COVER

SHOW STAR DEBUT! **LAUNCHING IN EARLY** 2006, this is the new High Definition Sky digibox. Manufactured by Thomson, the jet-black unit boasts a hard disk for recording, and will offer the usual pause and rewind features found on existing Sky+ boxes. While the exact size of the hard disk is to be confirmed, we do know the box will offer both 720p and 1080i resolutions via both its HDMI and component video outputs. The company has also confirmed that from the launch of its HD service, it will offer movies, documentaries, dramas and as many as 100 Premiership matches in High Definition quality. As you'll have read above, Sky will be out in force at our show, so be sure you visit its stand for the latest news!

FLAGSHIP TOSH LCD LAUNCHES

SHOW STAR DEBUT! **TOSHIBA WILL BE** showing its new flagship LCD TVs, the high performance WLT58 range. Available in 32in, 37in and 42in screen sizes, this new line-up is HD-ready. Each set boasts dual-HDMI inputs, component and Scart sockets, together with an integrated digital TV tuner. You'll also be able check out Toshiba's new HDMI-equipped DVD player, the SD-350E. Check out our exclusive review (starting on p52) – and visit Toshiba's stand to see for yourself!

YAMAHA STEPS UP THE AMP WAR

SHOW STAR DEBUT! **YAMAHA'S DECISION TO** endow its RX-V4600RDS receiver with HDMI video-switching looks shrewd in the current High-Def climate. This £1000 THX Select 2 certified design boasts 7 x 130 watts output, plus FireWire inputs for DVD-Audio and SACD. Read about it next issue, then hear it at the show.

THREE-CHIP HEAVEN FROM SIM2

SHOW STAR DEBUT! **THE PROJECTOR SPECIALIST** SIM2 is proclaiming a revolution with its new C3X range. Based on the ultra-high-performance three-chip DLP system, the new line-up claims the colour realism and contrast of SIM2's £25,000 HT500E model. There's a £10,995 'entry-level' C3X Lite, a £12,995 C3X (with a more powerful lamp), and a £15,995 C3X Link, which adds an external media box. We'll have a C3X in action on our show stand – and we'll be testing one exclusively in next month's issue.

The C3X should up DLP picture-quality to new heights

SHARP

morequalitytosee

A stunning breakthrough in picture quality, our new Aquos P-Series is the first and only LCD TV range specifically designed for UK PAL TV broadcasts.

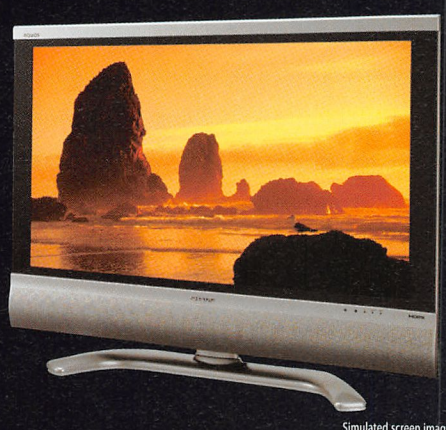
The secret is in our innovative P-Series LCD panel. As the dot count of this panel is so close to that of the PAL broadcast signal, the result is a picture quality that compares with the best conventional CRT TV.

PAL Signal | P-Series Panel | Perfect Picture

And, all models are fitted with HDMI (HDCP) and component input terminals making them completely future-proof.

Complementing the beautiful picture, the ecologically friendly Aquos P-Series has a breathtakingly beautiful slim design.

Take a closer look right now, at www.sharp.co.uk



Simulated screen image

Aquos P-Series available in 37"/ 32"/ 26" models.

AQUOS

THERE'S MORE TO SEE

PSP GOES FILM CRAZY Lucky owners of PlayStation's new PSP handheld can now watch some of the coolest movies on the move. Titles will shortly be available in UMD (Universal Media Disk) form at just £20

HITACHI HOOK UP Hitachi has teamed up with Dixons and Currys to sell a new hi-fi system. The AX-M140 costs £550 and features a DVD/CD player and DAB radio. The system even boasts a 40GB internal hard disk, capable of storing around 10,000 songs

DEAL OF THE MONTH

IF YOU'RE AFTER a funky-looking projector, then Hewlett Packard's space-age ep7122 could be just the ticket. Reviewed in our July 2005 issue, the HP is a DLP model that delivers a solid, stable picture – and it's now available for just £799, down from £1330.

WHAT'S NEW?

HOME CINEMA

ARCAM REVEALS NEW DIVA

ARCAM IS LOOKING to rock your home-cinema world with the release of a new DiVA combination. The AVP700 processor (£1400, pictured here) and P1000 power amp (£1600) aim to bridge the gap between the company's AVR300 receiver, and the heavy-hitting FMJ AV8/P7 processor/power amp combo.

The AVP700 offers video up-conversion, HDMI-switching and balanced audio outputs. The P1000 produces a hefty 135 watts per channe and is seven-channel capable. Both the DiVA AVP700 (£1400) and DiVA P1000 (£1600) are available now – and you can read a full review of the pair in the next issue.

HOME CINEMA

BE HIT FOR SIX BY PIONEER PLASMA

Following on from its hugely successfull '5' series Pioneer has unveiled its sixth generation of plasma TVs. The 43in PDP-436XDE (£2800) and 50in PDP-506XDE (£3800) models include built-in digital tuners, plus dual HDMI inputs, while the PDP-436FDE (£2500) and PDP-506FDE (£3500) come with fewer features, including no digital tuner and one less HDMI input. Look out for an exclusive *First Test* in the November issue.

LOOK AT 'U', iRIVER

iRiver's new U10 MP3 player features a shiny 2.2in colour screen and a fancy 'direct click' operating system – press an area of the screen's frame, and the U10 simply falls into line.

You've got the choice between the 1GB flagship model (£179) and its 512MB sibling (£159)

The optional docking station (£49) sports a 'retro TV' look and comes complete with stereo speakers and a remote.

NOVEMBER ISSUE – ON SALE THURS 29 SEPT

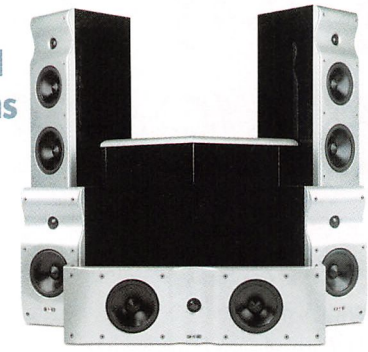
Next month

Say hello to your next television!

Don't buy a flat TV until you read our *Supertest* of 32in LCD lovelies

Take **movies** to the max

Rated: serious surround sound speaker systems



Pocket some **MP3 power**

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Supertest

THE UK'S ULTIMATE COMPARATIVE REVIEW **NO.352**

High-end CD players promise sweetest sounds

What's new?

This area of the CD market has contracted of late, with only the very best players left standing. Four well-regarded UK machines, including a variation on 2004's Product of the Year, are attempting to repel an invasion by three new Scandinavian players, none of which have been tested here before. It's like the Vikings all over again, but without longships... well, sort of.

What do you get for your money?

You can buy a good CD player for £250, so why spend six times that? Well you must get some intangible glow of satisfaction to go along with superlative sound quality. There's no question that all seven of these machines are well specified and incorporate expensive componentry where it counts. Build quality, while broadly acceptable, isn't always what we tend to demand at this price point. However, there's no doubt that a CD player of this quality, in a price-comparable system, offers a whole new level of sonic performance.

SAVVY SHOPPER

1 Everything in proportion

There's nothing to be gained by putting all your hard-earned into one of these cracking CD players if you don't have the same sort of money to spend on a suitable amplifier. Loudspeakers, too, will need to be of a similar price (or, heaven help us, more expensive) if you're to exploit the full potential of your new machine. And we're sure you won't have overlooked accessories, such as some proper interconnects, speaker cable, stands, etc.

2 Classic demo technique

Orchestral and classical music is ideal for finding out what a CD player is capable of. If you don't know your Arne from your Elgar, do what we've done in this issue: get hold of a John Williams movie score. *War of the Worlds* offers huge dynamic fluctuations, constant frequency extremes and a packed soundstage. Instruments need room to express themselves.

"There's no question that all seven of these players are well specified and use expensive componentry in all of the right places"

RATINGS EXPLAINED

Five stars indicates a strong performance from a machine that should work in just about any system. Four stars signifies a performer that's worth a listen, even if its all-round game is less impressive. As the stars fall away, so does performance – though some three star products can work well in specific systems. Don't worry about the rest.

★★★★★ Excellent

★★★★☆ Very good

★★★☆☆ Average

★★☆☆☆ Below par

★☆☆☆☆ Don't bother

THE CONTENDERS CD PLAYERS £1400–£1750

Copland CDA823
£1750
Page 40

Cyrus CD8x/PSX-R
£1400
Page 40

Densen Beat B-400 Plus
£1400
Page 39

Exposure Classic XXII
£1400
Page 39

Myryad MXC6000
£1400
Page 44

Naim CD5x
£1450
Page 44

Primare CD31
£1500
Page 46

JARGON BUSTER

Coaxial/optical: Two types of digital audio connections – we favour the former

BUYER'S GUIDE

For more than 1400 test verdicts, check out our *Buyer's Guide* on p91

Copland CDA823

★★★★★ £1750

OFFICE OPINION IS unanimous: this is the most infuriating five-star product we've reviewed in ages. It's got a list of talents as long as your arm but – by gosh! – it doesn't half try your patience.

Let's cut to the chase: the CDA823 is the best-sounding machine in this test. With John Williams' spectacular *War of the Worlds* soundtrack spinning in the tray, the Copland puts on a performance of rare energy, dynamism, and communication. The turbulent orchestral assault of *The Attack on the Car* is transcribed effortlessly, the CDA823 extracting the last drop of information and detail and laying it out explicitly.

Focus and separation are first-rate, there's limitless drive and a telepathic understanding of integration and timing. The orchestra sounds larger and more urgent here than on any other player.

FOR
Lyrical, forceful, energetic and endlessly musical sound

AGAINST
It's incredibly frustrating to use; not the best for relaxing background listening

VERDICT
The Copland sounds a good deal more expensive than it is, but in terms of ease and convenience, it's a pain

Full steam ahead...

The Copland copes with Blackalicious's *Smithzonian Institute of Rhyme* without breaking stride. Voices are full and expressive, with generous space around them, while the top end has bite and sparkle without becoming brittle or harsh. The CDA823 doesn't see itself as providing background music – the sound is upfront and forceful – but it's a fluid and lyrical performer. And switching to the balanced outputs raises the game: there's even greater drive and attack, and some startlingly deep and taut bass.

As you're willing to accept a CD player that likes to be the centre of attention, the Copland CDA823 is an excellent-sounding machine at the money.

What's so wrong with it? Well, it takes what feels like an eternity to read CDs (it's actually closer to 16 seconds, but after the first few times it starts to seem much longer) and won't read them at all unless they're spotlessly clean. The tray makes a noise like a coffee grinder as it opens and closes – shameful in a machine that costs this sort of money. And if you select a track via the remote, it doesn't start the track from the beginning but from a fraction of a second into the song. This sort of thing can drive you to contemplating the Keith Moon approach to electrical appliances.

> "This Copland has a list of talents as long as your arm, but it does try your patience"

There you have it: the Copland CDA823 is a wonderful-sounding CD player, but an absolute pig to live with. Frank Sinatra was much the same.

The Copland gives you both extremes: killer sound, but it's a pain in the butt to live with

Cyrus CD8x/PSX-R

★★★★☆ £1400

WE WERE IMPRESSED when Cyrus's CD8 evolved into the CD8x – so much so that we made it our 2004 Product of the Year. We were impressed yet further when we heard the extra resolution and scale brought to bear when the PSX-R power supply is introduced into the equation. And our affection and admiration for the diminutive Cyrus combo is undimmed, despite its grip on a five-star recommendation being loosened by the simultaneous arrival of no less than three excellent Scandinavian players.

> "The Cyrus's grip on a five-star recommendation has been loosened by its rivals"

There's little about the CD8x/PSX-R pair that'll rub you up the wrong way - our biggest gripe away from sonic issues is the user interface. The buttons are very small and unhelpfully positioned – opening or closing the disc tray is akin to operating Arkwright's till in *Open All Hours* – you're always afraid for the tips of your fingers. Otherwise, it's a sturdy and logically laid-out unit with a remote as sensible as any here.

Two minutes with the Cyrus pairing is enough to remind us of everything that's loveable about it. Play Nick Cave's *There She Goes, My Beautiful World* and the fast, composed sound is thrilling. It's a rigorously marshalled sound the CD8X/PSX-R presents – analytical, never clinical but fractionally mechanical when compared to the newest opponents. Detail, both broad and fine, is communicated in deluges and Cave's preaching is invested with bags of emotional warmth and urgency. The Cyrus demonstrates tremendous verve; it's a potent and generally musical combination.

John Williams's soundtrack for *War of the Worlds* illustrates the Cyrus' telescopic dynamic reach and control, assuredly transcribing the tension whether breathless or bombastic. Transients remain focused and the tightrope between the big picture and the minutiae is walked confidently.

FOR
Excitingly rapid and musical sound; dynamic reach; convincing soundstage

AGAINST
Lean low-end sound; lacking ultimate resolution; can sound mechanical; awkward disc-loading rigmarole

VERDICT
All its charms are intact, but the Cyrus has been usurped by more accomplished all-rounders

Too lean at the bottom end

Each time we've reviewed this combo, we've had reservations about the bass reproduction – and the Copland and Primare machines make the Cyrus sound lightweight. There's no shortage of communication, and enviable speed, but the CD8x/PSX-R can't provide the necessary bass-depth. Resolution, too, is marginally off the pace these days.

This Cyrus pairing combines many virtues to present a competitive sound – but our new favourites have shown up flaws that can't be ignored. Only if you've an system that's chunky at the bottom end could it be the one for you.

Hugely talented, but some extraordinarily good competitors have taken the edge off it

CON

CONSTANTLY ON THE PHONE

SHOPS WAY TO MUCH

TERRIBLE COOK

HAIRY ARMPITS

PRO

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CONCEPT 6

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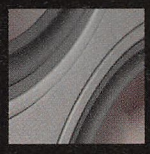

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Densen Beat B-400 Plus

★★★★★

£1400

FOR
Finger-poppin', toe-tappin', rug-cuttin' listen; bags of detail

AGAINST
Low end isn't the last word in definition; remote costs £150

VERDICT
As slim and good-looking as Sienna Miller, as happy to party as Jude Law – the Densen is a good-time device if ever there was one

IF WE'RE HONEST (and you know we are), we've been intending to review this latest incarnation of Densen's Beat 400 CD player for a little while now. This is the first *Supertest* it's been appropriate for, though, so better late than never. It won't be spoiling any cliffhanging endings to say, right now, that the slim-yet-chunky B-400 Plus is well worth the wait.

It's not uncommon for us to get ever-so-slightly tetchy about the quality of remote controls in general – and more so in tests like this, where the equipment can't be described as cheap. In the case of the Densen's remote – the Gizmo – though, our complaints don't concern the poverty of the handset. It's a tactile, finely finished, metal device that can control a whole host of Densen components.

No, we're narked by the fact that the B-400 Plus costs £1400 without the Gizmo, or £1550 with. Also, the narrow display is reminiscent of a late-1970s digital watch – but that's it as far as the value and finish are concerned.

And the Beat goes on...

Even the briefest listen to the Densen is enough to soothe our moral outrage. Right from the off, it's an impressive performer: with Saint Etienne's typically winsome *Sun In My Morning* spinning in the tray, the B-400 Plus generates a fast and dynamic sound. Detail is plentiful, tempo and timing is extremely well judged – music fairly sprints along.

Within this vigorous and enthusiastic presentation, the top frequencies scintillate, without threatening to veer into stridency. Voices, and the midrange in general, enjoy decent space and definition – though they're not the most explicit offer in this *Supertest*.

Down among the low-frequency action is where our only slight reservations about the Densen are. Bass information isn't regimented enough: there's plenty of presence, and the information doesn't overstay its welcome, but the leading and trailing edges of the bottom-end stuff aren't as rock-solid as the Copland CDA823.

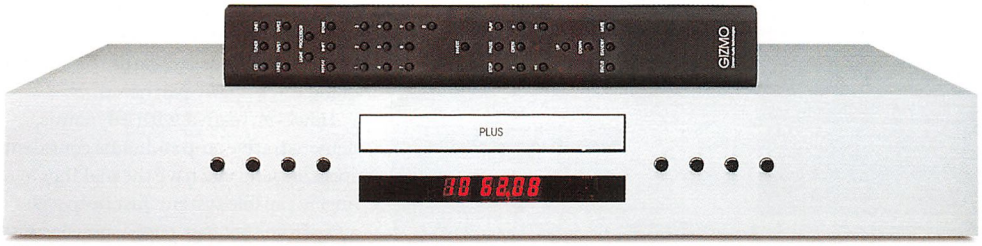
Eric B & Rakim's timeless *Paid In Full* wants for nothing in the way of drive or attack, and there's ample solidity to the sound, but the iconic bassline is left fractionally fuzzy around the edges.

> "The Densen is a rocking listen – it's the best here for sheer brio and attack"

The Densen Beat B-400 Plus is an indisputably rocking listen. Its enthusiasm is infectious, and it's the best machine here where sheer brio and attack are concerned. In addition, it rampages through testing dynamic shifts without batting an eyelid.

All this, plus its winning way with tempo-management and aspiration to a natural voice mean that it's a more agreeable proposition than even the Cyrus. And yet, it's not the best machine here.

Densen's beast of a CD player hits the spot when it comes to overall verve and attack



Exposure Classic XXII

★★★★☆

£1400

FOR
Fast, fulsome and dynamic; solidly made and handsome

AGAINST
Tendency to bludgeon low frequencies; some detail goes astray

VERDICT
Probably too specific a sound for the populace at large, but the Exposure has a great many strengths

IMAGINE THIS PLAYER is a slice of toast with Marmite on it. You've got an opinion on it already, haven't you? And a strong one too, probably. Under the tidy, understated fascia of the XXII is a machine that's as characterful and divisive as can be – five minutes with it will leave you either hungry for more or with an unpleasant taste in your mouth.

The Exposure is a well made and good-looking machine – that slab of aluminium houses a smooth-sliding disc tray, and the CD Text-enabled display is clear and comprehensive (if a trifle difficult to read in strong light). The remote handset might be mundane, but it's clearly labelled and comprehensive. The XXII loads and reads discs quickly and quietly, and is ready for action with minimum fuss.

> "Go-ahead, Marmite-eating types must give the Exposure Classic a thorough audition"

Fittingly, the Exposure is willing to lay its strengths and weaknesses bare from the word 'go'. With Four Tet's *You Were There With Me* spinning in the tray, the XXII wastes no time in establishing itself as a fast, attacking listen. There's a tangible sense of authority from the Classic, a benign but absolute control over even the largest of large-scale dynamic shifts and the critical sense of effortlessness that CD players at this price must achieve if they're to be anything but also-rans. Information pours forward in an almost decadent manner, painting a vibrant sonic picture.

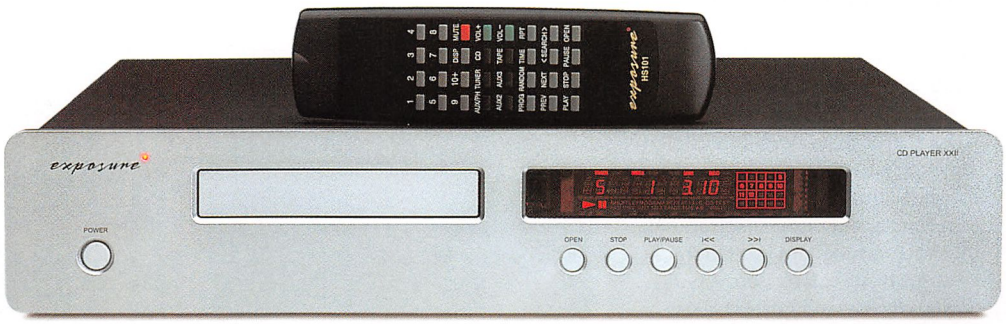
Natural not neutral...

Switching to The Broken Family Band's *Where The Hell Is My Baby?* reveals the XXII's natural way with voices and persuasive ability to establish a soundstage. The entire midrange is beautifully realised and convincing – it's the most impressive aspect of this CD player.

Our reservations about the Classic's performance are either side of the midrange. The bottom end is, we think, fractionally lumpy – committed bassheads will admire its forthright character, but it's a little bit blunt. That same characteristic is carried all the way to the top – treble frequencies don't sparkle in quite the way they should and some fine details are alluded to rather than explicitly described.

Go-ahead, Marmite-eating types must give the XXII a thorough audition – it's a rich, dynamic player with a winning way with vocals and plenty of bottom-end grunt. Those who find yeast extract (or low-frequency bombast) induces nothing but a shudder will move on quickly.

This characterful player has plenty of strengths and weakness: it's a case of "is it right for me?"



Myryad MXC6000

★★★★☆ £1400

EVERYTHING'S COMING OFF the centre of the bat for Myryad at the moment. The MXI2080 amplifier, which is intended to complement this CD player, saw off some very stiff competition in last month's *Supertest* to emerge as a worthy winner in the £1000 price bracket. How will the MXC6000 fare against some equally tough CD player contenders?

Visually, the two siblings share a great deal. The MXC6000 is a discreet and inconspicuous looker, with a minimum of controls on the fascia and an agreeably curvy remote control taking care of the details. Pale-blue-on-black

FOR
Big, uncluttered soundstage; emotive midrange; fine detail retrieval; good looks

AGAINST
Might come on as clinical if poorly partnered; deeply irritating power switch

VERDICT
Subtle, detailed and understated, this is some folks' dream CD player. Be sure and choose its colleagues carefully, though

The 3010 satisfies in some areas, but the competition is just a bit too strong for it

might be the default display 'de jour', but it adds to the Myryad's air of unfussy sophistication. The loading tray slides with quiet stability and the machine reads the contents of CDs with alacrity.

Only the power switch sitting front-and-centre above the display strikes a false note ergonomically: it's extremely sensitive, and the slightest brush against it causes the player to switch to standby. There isn't room here to go into just how infuriating this is.

How's it on the move?

The MXC6000 aspires to a similar sort of presentation as its amp relative. What can, initially, seem a depressingly undemonstrative presentation is revealed over time as, in fact, a subtle and insightful listen. Even the radio-friendly, ultra-compressed stylings of Hard-Fi's *Tied Up Too Tight* are granted some much-needed breathing space by the Myryad and benefit enormously from the player's wide and well-defined soundstage. Detail and nuance are given full representation, and the all-important midrange is natural and very expressive. We could never describe it as a seat-of-the-pants ride, and it's not the most dynamically capable CD player in this test, but it paints a neutral, natural

> "Unless you intend to party hard every night, the Myryad is a genuinely hot contender"

and convincing picture. Unless you intend to party hard every night, the Myryad's a genuine contender.

It goes without saying that anyone considering dropping this sort of money on a CD player will investigate system-matching carefully, but where the Myryad is concerned, it's more important than ever. A listen to The Congos's *Open Up The Gate* illustrates what a poised and cohesive device this is – but there is a tendency towards the clinically bland if it's poorly partnered.

However, team it with a dynamic, demonstrative amp and some confident speakers, and you have the makings of a hugely capable system. Just keep well away from that hair-trigger power switch.

Naim CD5x

★★★★☆ £1450

NAIM MIGHT SEEK to make virtues out of its own single-mindedness, but like every other hi-fi company, it can't ignore the imperatives of the marketplace. And even though the Salisbury firm has, lately, emerged blinking into the wider world – this CD player and the matching Nait 5i amplifier are compatible with other manufacturers' kit – it still does things in its own inimitable way. Black-only finish, manual tray that opens at an angle to the fascia, DIN output (as well as RCA): Naim has

> "The Naim grips recordings forcefully – so there's never any question who is boss"

calmed its eccentricities, but it hasn't totally expunged them.

Just as the Cyrus contender has fallen foul of some extraordinarily accomplished new rivals in this test, so has the Naim. Like the Cyrus, though, it's a fundamentally well-sorted and musical machine – it's just that its flaws are made to look a little more obvious by the strength of the new

FOR
Involving, engaging sound; cast-iron build quality; enjoyably quirky

AGAINST
Plump, confident low frequencies could be problematic

VERDICT
Naim-fanciers will be delirious; the rest of us will find plenty to admire, too

champs. Hence the loss of a star since it was *First Test*-ed in December last year.

Pull open the disc tray, drop in The Shins's *Chutes Too Narrow*, place the magnetic puck on top – you haven't lost the puck, have you? – and load the disc.

Performance ups and downs

Connected to our reference Krell amp using, firstly, five-pin DIN-to-stereo-phono connection and, afterwards, the more common stereo RCA interconnects, the CD5x wastes no time in painting a vividly musical picture.

The soundstage the CD5x describes is wide and well-defined, making even the densest recordings easy to follow, and it forms a cogent stereo image.

The Naim player is also an excellent judge of tempo and pace, keeping material on the front foot without forcing the issue. The grip the CD5x imposes over recordings is impressive – there's never any question of who's boss.

Switching to the atmospheric beats of David Holmes's *This Film's Crap, Let's Slash The Seats* reveals the one significant chink in the CD5x's armour: like much of Naim's recent kit, it's a smooth, comfortable and altogether indulgent ride. Low frequencies don't lack depth, but – at best – they're lush, plush and cosseting. At worst, they lack the taut, tight impact required to make best sense of a bass-heavy recording. It's not a major flaw, but fresher new rivals make the CD5x sound a bit warm and stuffy.

That said, the Naim gives nothing away where engagement and musicality are concerned – with careful partnering, it's a quirky, appealing player.

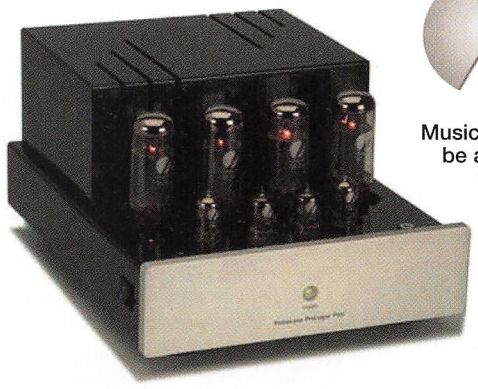
Pleasantly idiosyncratic to live with, the Naim has a vibrant and engaging sound

"A little champ of price/quality ratio: available at an affordable price, especially for a tube amplifier of more-than-usual power."
AUDIO REVIEW Italy, July 2004, Claudio Checchi

"PrimaLuna ProLogue One is now my 'affordable reference amplifier'. With apologies to various British and Italian geniuses, this amplifier has to my ears- no equals at its retail price."
HI-FI NEWS and record review, July 2004, Ken Kessler

"A refreshing change from the transistor competition with a captivating presentation. Excellent finish and build quality makes for a package strong on value."
HI-FI WORLD, August 2004, Dominic Todd

PROLOGUE ONE



PrimaLuna

Music is a pleasure not to be denied. So, too, the beauty of music reproduced by valves should be accessible to all. To make available to a wider audience the seductive, silky sound of the vacuum tube, PrimaLuna has developed a range of all-valve amplifiers with the construction, power and sonic performance of high-end electronics, but with one unique, inimitable feature: prices that can only be described as 'entry level'!

Since the arrival of the Prologue One, the audio community has been unable to contain its joy nor reign in its praise because PrimaLuna has revolutionised the concept of 'affordable audio.' With a pair of integrated amplifiers with prices more typical of mundane, solid-state products, PrimaLuna showed other manufacturers that compromises in fit and finish, styling and facilities are unnecessary.

Now PrimaLuna can offer the pride of ownership of true separates to aficionados on a budget. As promised, PrimaLuna has expanded the range upward with three exciting new models for users whose requirements demand separates rather than integrated amplifiers.

To meet these needs, the music lover can now consider the Prologue 3 dual-mono valve preamplifier with four line level inputs, and a choice of two matching stereo power amplifiers. The Prologue 4 provides 35W/channel from EL34 valves, while the Prologue 5 delivers 40W/channel courtesy of the classic KT88 tube.

And there's more good news: PrimaLuna has also announced retro-fittable auto bias boards for the Prologue 1 and 2, and a moving-magnet phono stage for the Prologues 1, 2 and 3. Additionally, there is now a choice of optional gold or silver front panels in place of the standard finish.

Audition the full range of Prologue models at the Pistol Music dealer of your choice. And prepare your wallet for a pleasant surprise.

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Primare CD31

★★★★★

£1500

IT'S ALL SUBJECTIVE, but to our eyes the CD31 is the best-looking machine in this test. There are more important things to be concerned with, naturally, but Oscar Wilde didn't say, "It's only shallow people who don't judge by appearances," for nothing. We're all interior designers now, it seems, and good-looks add to the overall charm.

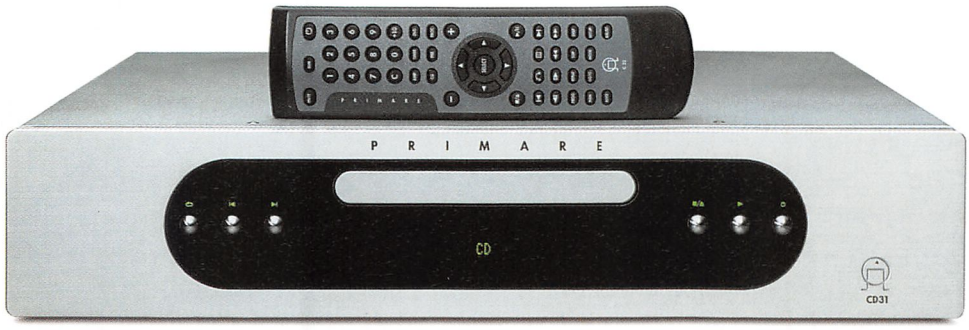
We've judged a fair bit of Primare equipment lately, and found it all to be competitive, value-for-money stuff. The identically priced I30 amplifier scored five stars in August. And if one thing has become apparent from these recent tests, it's that Primare is pretty consistent in its audio signature – and the CD31 sits just as comfortably in sonic terms with its siblings as it does visually.

FOR
Fine build and (to our eyes) svelte looks; forthright, but not overbearing, sound

AGAINST
Can sound a tiny bit tentative through the RCA outputs

VERDICT
Primare's surefooted progress continues – fine sound and good looks should ensure plentiful sales

The CD31 continues where the excellent I30 amp left off – Primare is on some roll this year



Demonstratively talented...

Loading I Am Kloot's splendid *Gods And Monsters* disc into the CD31 hints at its credentials early on. It's a painless, drama-free exercise (unlike the Cyrus or Copland machines) which illustrates the Primare's superb build. Neither does the sound disappoint. It's not the most immediately impressive listen, but the CD31 is a subtle and insightful device that founds a big, well-defined soundstage and unearths fine levels of detail.

There's possibly less raw shove to dynamically testing material than is ideal, but the Primare communicates in spades without ever getting right up in your face like the Copland does.

Switch to the CD31's balanced outputs and it's an even more impressive story: sound separates yet further, making the stage easy to understand, and the previously rather reticent character gains plenty more crunch and bite. *Sheena Is A Punk Rocker* by The Ramones sounds genuinely insolent, packed with attitude and ropey musicianship.

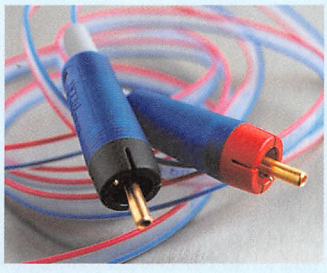
With the balanced output, things step on decisively in the dynamic area: there's greater attention to detail, better grip on transients and lovely, broad-stroke definition. Voices benefit too, becoming ever-more natural and expressive. At the bottom of the frequency range, there's ample weight and admirable speed; the upper frequencies attack glossily.

> "The Primare sounds a treat, and won't be overly fussy about the kit you pair it with"

So what Primare has served up is a well-made, competitively priced, impeccably finished and handsome CD player that sounds a treat and won't be overly fussy about its partnering equipment. At this price, there's more to a CD player than the sound it makes, and Primare seems to have hit the bulls-eye in every area of the manufacturing process. Can you tell we're mightily impressed?

KNOW HOW ESSENTIAL ACCESSORIES

Buying the right CD player isn't a straightforward task. Yes, you could go for the one that wins this test, and you'd certainly enjoy it, but there's no guarantee that it's the best fit for your system. The only sensible way is to choose is to listen to a selection of machines working in your system (or a similar set-up at your local dealer), using this test to create a shortlist of two or three products. In that way you can be sure you have the perfect player for your tastes and purposes. If even we say don't spend big sums of money solely on the basis of a magazine's recommendation then it must be true.



That's just the beginning...

So what's the best way to make sure you get proper value for money from your CD player? You guessed it... you spend just a bit more money. Having bought the ideal CD player, it makes sense to get the most out of it. Try a few different interconnects while you're auditioning your players, because these will make an obviously noticeable difference to the sound. They won't make a bad player good, of course, but well-chosen connections will minimise the loss of information between CD player and amplifier. Take a look at our *Buyer's Guide*, talk to your dealer – even a word with the CD player manufacturer to get its recommendation can put you on the right track. The same is true for loudspeaker cable, too.

So what else do I add?

And it shouldn't stop there: mains cables need to be considered, too. CD players are sensitive to the noise and pollution in our mains supply, and the mains cable that comes free with every electrical item you've ever purchased can seriously impede performance. Try upgrading your mains cable (see *Now Add These* on p49) and we're sure you'll be startled by the improvement in sound quality. Refinement, imaging, tighter bass and less edgy treble are among the more obvious advantages.

Don't forget that hi-fi equipment functions more efficiently on a dedicated support. Isolating your CD player from movement reduces internal resonance – CDs spin at a fair rate, which causes vibrations that must be absorbed – and helps efficiency. A lot of delicate processing, such as digital-to-analogue conversion, takes place on board your player – minimising motion interference can only be a good thing. It all leads to that Holy Grail – better sound.

Equipment racks – such as the Clearlight Aspekt, pictured below – are an essential addition to any decent audio system

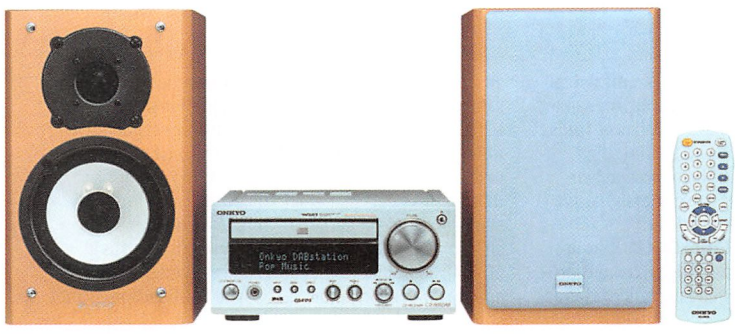
The Sound of Japan

CR-505DAB: *"We're impressed with Onkyo's CD / DAB micro system"*
DS-A1: *"The Onkyo dock gives a heftier, more detailed sound than a cable can"*
September 2005

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★

www.onkyo.co.uk
Tel. 01494-681515

ONKYO®
IMAGINATIVE SIGHT & SOUND



<<< Onkyo, the dominant mini component Audio Brand of Japan presents the CS220UK, featuring DAB, MP3 playability and extended features with the optional Remote Interactive iPod dock. Experience the art of miniaturisation perfected by Onkyo and fill your room with sound not HIFI.

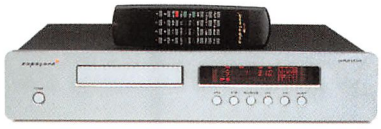
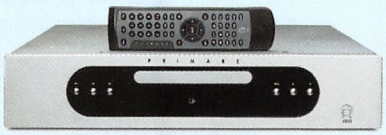
>>> Do more with your iPod* with Onkyo's optional DS-A1 Remote Interactive Dock.

* iPod is trademark of Apple Computer, Inc.

Audio and Photo Playback
Control From Afar
Charged and Ready to Go

Onkyo was Japan's No.1 Brand selling mini systems (width 201mm-301mm) in 2004. *(Based on the sales reports of 3,500 retailers in Japan 2004 - Source Gfk Marketing Service Japan Ltd)*

FACTS AND FIGURES

	INTEGRATED	MULTIDISC	PHONO	BALANCED	AES/EBU DIGITAL	OPTICAL DIGITAL	COAXIAL DIGITAL	HDCD	CD TEXT	DISPLAY OFF	DIMENSIONS (HWD) CM	WEIGHT (KG)
COPLAND CDA823	●		●	●		●	●				12x43x39	9
£1750 www.copland.com 020 8459 3909												
★★★★★ ★★★★★ **SOUND** By turns muscular and subtle, the CDA823 is a dynamic and musical performer.												
★★★☆☆ **BUILD** Looks fine on the shelf and feels okay in the hand, but is a bit noisy and truculent to use .												
★★★★★ **FEATURES** As well specified as it needs to be – balanced outputs bring greater scale to the sound.												
CYRUS CD8X/ PSX-R	●		2			●	●				8x22x36 (two)	4/6
£1400 www.cyrus.co.uk 01480 435577												
★★★★☆ ★★★★☆ **SOUND** Enviable speed, detail and dynamic ability, but not the weight of the class-leaders.												
★★★★☆ **BUILD** Sturdy but not as substantial as the best. Everything works smoothly, but look out for that tray.												
★★★★☆ **FEATURES** No balanced output, but everything else is present and correct.												
DENSEN BEAT B-400 PLUS	●		2			●	●				6x44x31	8
£1400 www.densen.com +45 7518 1214												
★★★★★ ★★★★★ **SOUND** Up-front and energetic sound, loaded with detail, but a little vague at the bottom end.												
★★★★★ **BUILD** Slim, chunky and handsome box; slick and silent disc tray adds to the impression of quality.												
★★★★☆ **FEATURES** A decent array of outputs, but the lack of balanced out gives ground to competitors.												
EXPOSURE CLASSIC XXII	●		●			●	●		●		9x44x30	9
£1400 www.exposurehifi.com 01273 423877												
★★★★☆ ★★★★☆ **SOUND** Very characterful sound, fast and confident, but the low frequencies can be blunt.												
★★★★☆ **BUILD** Elegant and simple layout, smooth user interface and a looker in an understated sort of way.												
★★★★☆ **FEATURES** No glaring omissions, but the best machines here feature balanced outputs for best quality.												
MYRYAD MXC6000	●		●			●			●		10x44x34	8
£1400 www.myryad.co.uk 01279 501111												
★★★★☆ ★★★★☆ **SOUND** As understated as the looks – the soundstage and, in particular, midrange are as convincing as anything here.												
★★★★★ **BUILD** Understated design and quality materials give proper pride of ownership. Try not to be driven mad by the power switch.												
★★★★☆ **FEATURES** Competitive with the mainstream and not short of facilities, but others here do more.												
NAIM CD5x	●		●	DIN				●			7x43x30	11
£1450 www.naim.co.uk 01722 332266												
★★★★☆ ★★★★☆ **SOUND** Engaging voice and rock-solid imaging only partly compensate for well-fed bass-end presentation.												
★★★★★ **BUILD** Rock-solid build quality, an impression of unburstable integrity and, to some, the nicest loading mechanism.												
★★★★☆ **FEATURES** The Naim incorporates a feature no other in the test does. Unfortunately, it's a DIN output.												
PRIMARE CD31	●		●	●	●	●	●			●	10x43x39	11
£1500 www.primare.com 01423 359054												
★★★★★ ★★★★★ **SOUND** Second only to the Copland, this is a confident, coherent and involving performer.												
★★★★★ **BUILD** Casually substantial and aesthetically covetable, this is as well-made as anything here. We think it's the best looking, too.												
★★★★★ **FEATURES** A nap hand – does everything you could reasonably expect and a digital XLR, too.												

TYPE: Integrated players feature both transport and digital-to-analogue converter (DAC) in the same box; two-box players are designed so that certain components – such as the DAC and the power supply – are kept separate to optimise performance.

MULTIDISC: Some players can store more than one disc. High-end players are usually single-disc units.
PHONO stereo are the most common type of interconnects used to connect a CD player to an amplifier. Also called 'RCA', these are an analogue connection.

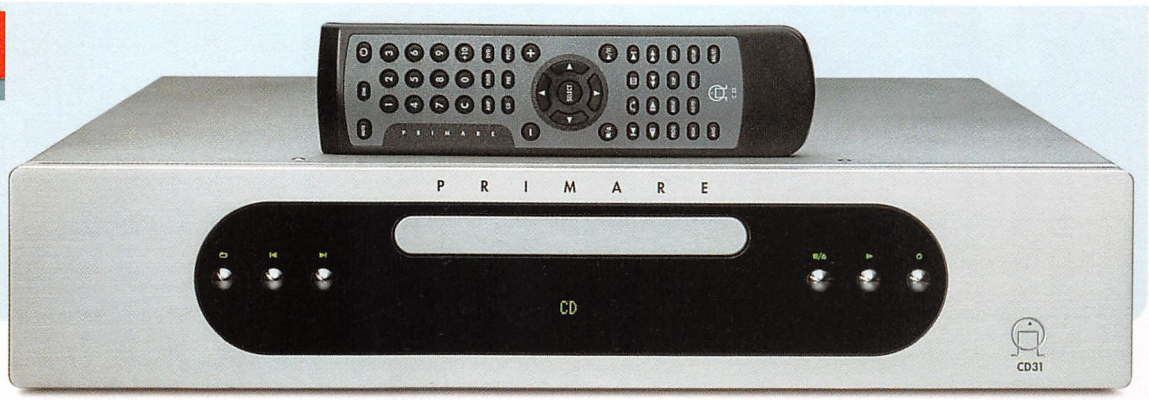
BALANCED outputs: These outputs allow for a superior type of analogue connection – one that's more resistant to outside electrical interference.
AES/EBU DIGITAL: Also sometimes (wrongly) called a 'balanced digital' connection, this type of digital connector uses coaxial cable terminated with the same sockets as balanced leads.
OPTICAL DIGITAL: High quality connection that sends a digital signal as a beam of light.
COAXIAL DIGITAL: The best type of digital connection – sends a digital signal as an electrical signal. Used the same kind of terminations as a standard RCA/phono lead.
HDCD: High-definition compatible CD is a type of CD that has more data than a standard silver disc encoded on it, for better sound.
CD TEXT: Some discs are encoded with information relating to the artist, CD and song title that can be decoded by a suitable player to appear on the display.
DISPLAY OFF: Some players allow you turn the display off, which tends to subtly improve the sound as it reduces interference to sound-reproduction circuits.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION SUPERTEST WINNER

Primare CD31

★★★★★

£1500



TEST RESULT The established players, such as Cyrus and Naim, got a bit of a beating here – now arise, Sir Primare!

WHEN THE CHEAPEST CD player in a test costs £1400, it might seem inappropriate to talk about 'bargains' – but that's what the Primare CD31 is. It's rare that a test (especially one as competitive as this) is won by a player other than the best sounding, but the Primare is breathing down the neck of the Copland on that score, and trounces it in other significant respects. As an all-round package, this Primare CD player impresses us hugely.

> "When the cheapest CD player costs £1400, you might think it wrong to talk about bargains, but it's what the Primare is"

Hedonists take note

The Copland snatches defeat from the jaws of victory here – it's so unpleasant to use that we couldn't just concentrate on the sound. In fact, if the Densen had just a little more focus at the low end, it could have forced the best-sounding device into the bronze-medal position. As it is, the Densen is a diverting option that'll will appeal to hedonists especially.

And the rest...

The second tier are all capable devices: the Cyrus and Naim kit might have dropped down to four stars but they're still packed with talent, despite their relative shortcomings being exposed by the newcomers. The Myryad and Exposure players, though very different temperaments, are also worthwhile machines that any sensible person should audition. Happily, there's not a poor CD player here – these are four very capable devices that live up to their price tags, though they're demonstrably not quite the 'bargain' that the CD31 undoubtedly is. Congratulations to Primare all round.

BUYER'S GUIDE £

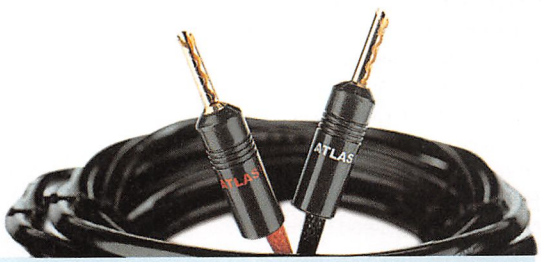
For more than 1400 test verdicts, check out our *Buyer's Guide* on p91

NOW ADD THESE

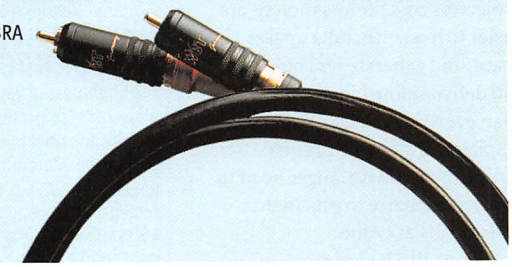
AMPLIFIER
PRIMARE I30
★★★★★
£ 1500
August 2005
Cracking dynamics, detail and timing. Superb build, looks and finish. The Primare I30 is a consummate music-making amp.

SPEAKERS
B&W 805S
★★★★★
£ 1600
July 2005
These compact cabinets look super-stylish and sound better. At the front of this set-up, the detail, rock-solid bass and super timing will astound.

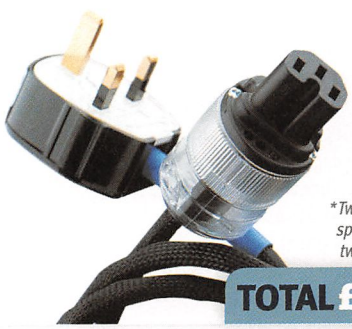
SPEAKER CABLE
ATLAS HYPER 3.0
★★★★★
£ £20/m
June 2005
A sonically flexible and adaptable cable, the Atlas is big on authority and clarity and makes the midrange shine.



INTERCONNECTS
TRUE COLOURS INDUSTRIES COBRA
★★★★★
£ 175 (1m)
November 2003
A sparkling, effective interconnect with great poise and balance. The XLR terminations will let the Primare kit strut its stuff.



MAINS CABLE
RUSS ANDREWS CLASSIC POWERKORD
★★★★★
£ 75
May 2004
Hearing is believing – a system as good as this will thrive on clean mains supplies and the Russ Andrews is among the most cost-effective upgrades you'll ever make. A superb finishing touch for this awesome system.



*Two 5m lengths of speaker cable and two mains cables

TOTAL £5125*

QUICK CHECK

We most often recommend Digital Light Processing (DLP) projectors. They offer the best blend of compact size and enhanced image quality

A decent £1000 projector will throw a 9ft image of good quality, but if you want a much bigger image, you'll have to spend more on a superior design

Most projectors have a good range of input sockets, including digital video inputs like DVI and HDMI, but not all are truly Hi-Def Ready

Instant Expert

PROJECTORS NO. 4

KNOW HOW The cinema is all about the thrill of the big screen. So how do you get the same impact in your front room? Read on...

BIG-SCREEN PROJECTORS are one of the fastest-growing areas of the home cinema market, and it's easy to see why. Once, because of the size, complexity and cost of a projector able to perform to a decent standard, the market for big-screen entertainment was limited to a hard-core of wealthy enthusiasts. But today, thanks to the rise of DLP (Digital Light Processing) technology, decent projectors cost far less money, are easier to live with, take up less space, and generate less noise, yet can deliver more big-screen impact than even the largest TV or plasma display will struggle to equal. Simply put, you no longer need to be a squillionaire to get cinema-style thrills at home.

It's not all a bed of roses, of course. As with most technologies, you get what you pay for, and more outlay delivers notably better image quality. But if you've ever wondered just how easy modern projectors are to live with and use, and which offers the best blend of performance and value for your budget, we've got the answers you need. Welcome to the wonderful world of the bigger picture...

HIDE IT ALL AWAY AS YOU CHOOSE

You needn't see a projector or its screen when you're not watching them. Both can be ceiling mounted or stowed away and brought out when needed. However, not all projectors suit table-top use – check for sturdy supports

MATCH THE IMAGE TO YOUR ROOM

The brightness of your projector's lamp influences the size and brightness of your image. More affordable projectors best suit smaller screens: ScreenPlay's £850 4805 suits a 9ft image, while the £4000 7210 suits 11ft

SEE EVERY DETAIL IN ALL ITS GLORY

If you know your projector's resolution, you'll know how detailed it can be. Let's take 1280 x 720 as an example: it means 1280 rows of pixels horizontally across the screen, and 720 vertically. That means 921,600 pixels

WATCH OUT FOR NOISY FANS

Projectors use powerful lamps, which generate a lot of light and heat. Most use bulb-cooling fans, but these can intrude into your viewing – look for ones that produce sound levels of 30dB or less

BEST BUYS You don't need huge piles of cash to get your own Odeon: £1000 is a great start, although more money will yield even better results. We've rounded up five great projectors for your delectation – for the full list, check out the BUYER'S GUIDE on p91

BEST FOR VALUE

OPTOMA H27

★★★★★

£ 699

Until last issue, only one product would have been in with a chance of making the cut here: the £850 ScreenPlay 4805 has been our favourite budget design for so long we've almost got bored of recommending it. But the Optoma H27 is so capable and so cheap it just has to demand your attention: we've yet to test it against its deadly ScreenPlay rival (watch this space!) but it looks to be the strongest challenger yet to the 4805's dominance.

BEST FOR HI-DEF ON A BUDGET

PANASONIC PT-AE700

★★★★½

£ 1700

The only LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) design we deem worthy enough to make these pages, the excellent Panasonic runs its DLP competitors close in terms of image quality, and is both compact and easy to use. It's also Hi-Def ready, with 1280 x 720 resolution and an HDMI input: you won't get an equivalent level of capability from any same-price DLP designs, even if they are slightly better for use with existing DVD and TV images.

BEST FOR TABLE-TOP USE

HEWLETT-PACKARD ep7122

★★★★½

£ 1330

Although not the best projector in its class – we think the cheaper ScreenPlay 4805 (£850) is a better bet – there's still much to admire in this HP. It's a breeze to set up, and the integral 'plinth' stand makes table-top positioning a doddle. If you fancy a projector but can't stomach the idea of a fixed installation (say, you live in a rented place, or simply have an aversion to white boxes dangling from your ceiling) then this is the one.

BEST ALL-ROUNDER

SIM2 HT300 E

★★★★★

£ 6000

OK, so you've a right to great performance for six grand, and the SIM2 certainly delivers. But this fantastic projector scores for more than just image quality: it's also one of the most complete packages we can think of. You want Hi-Def performance and an HDMI input? Check. How about great looks? Yup, present. It's even fairly small and light, so you can ceiling-mount it without recourse to structural reinforcement. All in all, it's a bit good...

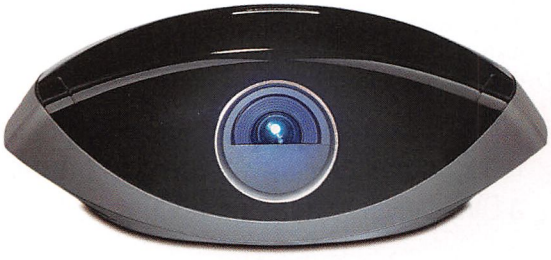
BEST FOR PLUTOCRATS

SCREENPLAY 777

★★★★★

£ 20,000

Twenty grand would buy you a fantastic home cinema system based around the SIM2 HT300 E (above), possibly even with a little change left over for a few DVDs. But if you want even bigger and even brighter, the ScreenPlay 777 is right up there with the projection elite: a three-chip DLP design, it's both spectacularly bright and blessed with astonishing levels of contrast. It also looks stunning, in a stealth-fighter-meets-Darth-Vader kind of way. Doubtless Mr Abramovich has one in his khazi.



CONNECT UP ALL YOUR SOURCES

Most projectors have loads of inputs: expect composite, S-Video and component sockets as a minimum, although Scart is a rarity. Look for DVI or HDMI digital video inputs if you want to get the best possible image quality, especially if you plan to use your projector to watch High Definition video

GET PROGRESSIVE SCAN AND MORE

DLP projectors contain both progressive scan processing and video scaling. Any video signal you put into your projector, even ordinary TV, will be 'deinterlaced' (turned into progressive scan) and then 'scaled' to match the resolution of your display. If you've got a 1280 x 720 projector (like the one shown here) the quality of the video processing is a crucial factor

Time to dump your 'supermarket special' **DVD player**, in favour of one these budget beauties – if you want special, you've got it!

Group Test

DVD PLAYERS **£99-£130**

Get more from your movies – for under £150!

What have we got?

We're ploughing into the more affordable end of the DVD player market. There are four models, all of which are vying for class-leading status. The entries from Pioneer and Yamaha have already been given a grilling by the WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION team, but we're now adding two brand-new players from Denon and Toshiba into the mix.

What do I get for my cash?

While budget 'supermarket' specials might seem appealing, these only slightly more expensive players offer superior picture and sound quality. They all come fitted with a Scart socket and a set of progressive-scan-enabling component video outputs as standard. The Toshiba even has an HDMI output for high-quality, all-digital video and sound delivery to a compatible TV or projector.

SAVVY SHOPPER

1 Think about your disc formats

Do you use DVD-Audio, SACD or DivX discs? If the answer is yes, make sure that the model you choose will play them. Similarly, if you want to play recordable discs, then you must make sure that the player is compatible with the format you're using. Check the specs on p57.

2 Look to the future

If you're thinking of upgrading your TV to a High Definition-ready model in the near future, you might want to consider a DVD player that features a digital video output – in the case of this test it would be the Toshiba. Luckily for you, it also happens to be the cheapest player here.

3 Is there also a difference in sound performance?

Yep. Whilst there are significant differences between the players in terms of DVD picture quality, the same can be said for CD playback. If you're not adverse to spinning tunes through your DVD player, then it's worth opting for the best balance of picture and sound. Otherwise, go for the one offering superior images.

"If you're upgrading your television to a High-Definition-ready model any time in the near future, think about buying a DVD player with a digital output, such as the Toshiba"

RATINGS EXPLAINED

Five stars mean the product is a super all-rounder that'll perform well in just about any system. A four-star rating signifies a DVD player that excels in some areas more than others. Three-star products are more average, while those with two or less don't warrant any attention from your wallet, so stay well clear of anything that weak.

★★★★★ Excellent

★★★★☆ Very good

★★★☆☆ Average

★★☆☆☆ Below par

★☆☆☆☆ Don't bother

Cheap doesn't necessarily mean bad – some of these budget DVD players give you performance that only a year ago would have been unthinkable at this price level

THE CONTENDERS **DVD PLAYERS**

Denon DVD-1720
£130
Page 54

Pioneer DV-585A
£130
Page 54

Toshiba SD-350E
£99
Page 55

Yamaha DVD557
£130
Page 55

JARGON BUSTER

HDMI: Use this digital socket to connect your DVD player to a suitable TV set

DivX: A method of compressing video. Allows films to fit on a single CD

BUYER'S GUIDE

For more than 1400 test verdicts, check out our Buyer's Guide on p91

Denon DVD-1720

★★★★★ £130

FOR
Excellent picture quality; presents clean, detailed images; sounds good for a DVD player

AGAINST
Remote could be easier to control

VERDICT
A great DVD player with loads of ability, the Denon is one of the best available at this price level

WE KICK OFF this little soirée with a Denon player, the first of the four big-name Japanese brands to feature in our latest budget DVD *Group Test*.

The DVD-1720 is a replacement for the hugely competent, four-star, DVD-1710. Specs for this new model are similar, but it's worth noting a couple of key differences: first, the new player boasts upgraded 10-bit, 108MHz video DACs and, second, this model can handle DivX-encoded discs.

Connectivity remains the same: there's a set of component outputs, together with a solitary RGB-capable Scart socket. Coaxial, optical and RCA phono sockets take care of the audio.

Visually not much has changed, though the new chassis is 8cm deeper than the old one. Compared to the waif-like Pioneer and Toshiba players, the Denon is slightly chunkier and bigger-boned, but that shouldn't really be a problem unless you're especially sizeist.

The player's remote also appears a bit on the large side – it's trickier to navigate than some of the others because the buttons are spread over a larger area.

What's it like in action?

Spark the Denon into life, and there's no doubting its ability. Images are crisp, cohesive and the player reveals an impressive level of detail. There's virtually no trace of noise to dampen your viewing spirits as the DVD-1720 paints a transparent and hugely enjoyable picture. Skin tones and clothing textures are accurately rendered and images appear three-dimensional and extremely convincing. The lovable, colourful characters of *Monsters Inc.* look great, while there's a similar level of realism dealt to the cast of *Constantine*, including the star, *Matrix*-meister himself, Keanu Reeves.

Sonically, the Denon is once again a strong performer. Soundtracks are delivered in a dynamic and vibrant manner, as the hell scene from *Constantine* confirms, the Denon spitting out a bags of detail.

Even in two-channel mode, there's plenty to be pleased about. The DVD-1720 times well enough, and allows for a fine sense of space and freedom around vocals and instruments. Feed it the *War of the Worlds* soundtrack and it gives a good account of itself.

> "Spark the Denon into life and there's no doubting its ability: images are crisp and cohesive, while there's an impressive level of detail"

If you already own – or plan to buy – one of Denon's excellent home cinema receivers, the DVD-1720 would be a great aesthetic and performance partner. But it's not the best DVD player in this test – for that honour, look opposite.

The Denon's picture and sound, including stereo, are good enough to be battling for top honours

Pioneer DV-585A

★★★☆☆ £130

FOR
Sounds impressive for a DVD player; hard to find a cheaper universal player on the market; gives you vibrant images

AGAINST
Picture quality is found wanting when compared to the best players: images lack cleanness, detail and realism

VERDICT
Attractive if you need a universal player, but there are better DVD players around

IF YOUR DISC collection includes DVD-Audio and SACD music discs, then Pioneer's DV-585A could be the player for you. This is a universal disc spinner, one of the cheapest examples of its type we've ever come across.

It caters for the playback of multichannel music via its set of six-channel preouts located on the back of the machine. You can then use Pioneer's on-screen menus to customise settings and adjust vital variables such as speaker size and distance in order to tailor the sound to your room layout. You've now got separate settings for multichannel music, as well as those stored on your home cinema receiver for use with normal DVD films.

And while we're still on the subject of sound, the Pioneer does well enough to compete with the majority of players in this *Group Test*. The DVD soundtrack to the film *Constantine* is delivered with purpose and drive. On the other hand, discs with a more musical edge, such as Linkin Park's *Reanimation*, reveal this player's admirable dynamic and rhythmic abilities. It's not going to be able to compete with the likes of a stand-alone CD player at this price, but it's enjoyable enough for occasional use.

Picture isn't universally admired

As far as picture quality is concerned, the Pioneer has a lot to live up to – its predecessor, the DV-575A, was a fantastic five-star product. However, such is the strength of the current competition that the DV-585A can't quit muster a winning level of performance.

Connectivity is similar to its predecessor: you're provided with a single Scart socket and set of component outputs – there's no digital video output.

In action, you find colours are rich, vivid and eye-catching. This is especially evident during the immensely enjoyable *Monsters Inc.* DVD. The Pioneer is capable of displaying decent detail, but there's not quite the insight that other players this test can provide. Compared to the very best, images appear soft, lacking clarity and pin-point attention to detail.

Similarly, the facial features and textures of Will Smith's character in *Hitch* lack absolute clarity and, therefore, a sense of absolute realism. The edge-definition and motion-tracking during the gridiron action of *Friday Night Lights* could also be better.

> "Will Smith's facial features in *Hitch* lack absolute clarity and, therefore, their realism"

If you're in need of a universal player then the DV-585A is worth considering due to the affordable price tag and decent sonic credentials. However, if you're simply after the best picture possible, then we'd suggest looking at a couple of the alternatives in this *Group Test*.

Uniquely in this *Group Test*, the Pioneer DV-585 is a universal disc player, but its picture quality falls short of the best by some margin

Toshiba SD-350E

★★★★★ £99

THIS PLAYER'S OBSCENE! For starters, take a look at its price tag. At just £99, the SD-350E is the cheapest player here by a hefty £30. Not only that, but this skinny little disc-spinner is the only model in this *Group Test* fitted with an HDMI output. Consequently, it's capable of transferring picture and sound data to a compatible display in purely digital form. With a built-in scaler, too, the Tosh could be something pretty special, but does it have the performance to match?

The great news is that this player has the best picture in this test – but the bad news is that it could be better. You're presented with truly astonishing images, featuring superb definition and detail. Even pictures sent via the Scart socket are good enough to trouble some more expensive players out there.

FOR
Sublime detail levels and engrossing depth of field, accurate and vibrant colour balance, sounds decent, too

AGAINST
Pictures via HDMI could be better

VERDICT
Behind the Toshiba's budget price tag lies a sensational DVD player worth every penny, and a few more

And, if you thought these images were impressive, switch to the player's component video outputs and picture quality steps up a gear. The level of clarity is almost unbelievable. Spin the computer animated action of *Monsters Inc.* and the Toshiba's progressive scan picture can't fail to impress. Such is the level of realism on display, it's like you could just step up to your screen and slap Sully on his hairy, green back.

The problems start when you move 'up' to the player's HDMI output, which should improve matters further. Unfortunately, it doesn't. Using the internal scaler to match the picture as closely as possible to our 768-line TV, we set the picture to 720p. However, we found images lost transparency, skin textures in *Hitch* becoming more cloudy and less defined. Cracks also begin to show in the previously rock-solid edge-definition.

Switching to 1080i improves matters, but only slightly. We actually found that outputting just a 576p signal produced the best images, which just goes to show that because a DVD player comes fitted with its own internal scaler, it doesn't necessarily mean it's going to be better than the one built into your TV.

Sonically, the Toshiba is perfectly acceptable for a product at this price point. In two-channel mode the SD-350E ambles along at a decent-enough pace. Effects sound a touch lean when firing out DVD soundtracks, but they're

> "Such is the clarity on offer during *Monsters Inc.* that you feel like you could step up to the TV screen and slap Sully on his big, hairy, green back"

delivered in a lively and energetic enough manner to compete with all the other players on show. The Toshiba is certainly no slouch. The chase scene at the end of *Monsters Inc.* through the cavernous door warehouse sounds dynamic and fun.

This is a fantastic DVD budget player that caters for all your visual needs. Even though the HDMI images aren't quite what we hoped for, Toshiba's SD-350E is still a class-leader.

A built-in scaler and HDMI output look great on paper, but they're not the reason this is so good

Yamaha DVD-557

★★★☆☆ £130

AS YOU'D PROBABLY expect, Yamaha's latest range of home cinema products centres around new multichannel receivers, but thankfully, DVD players aren't surplus to requirements.

The DVD-557 is the company's entry-level model. It's a fairly no-frills unit – there's no DVD-Audio or SACD compatibility, but the Yamaha will play DivX-encoded discs if you so require.

The unit itself is a smart, slender design, featuring a rather attractive titanium finish. The front panel hosts a sparse selection of buttons, while around the back of the unit there's a standard assortment of video outputs, including a Scart socket and PAL/NTSC progressive scan-capable component video outputs. To get wired for two-channel sound you can use the Yamaha's phono outputs, and there are coaxial and optical digital outputs for use with DVD soundtracks.

The remote is a palm-friendly affair, with all buttons in close proximity for your fingers. This makes navigating the various on-screen displays that little bit easier and less time-consuming.

FOR
Simple, unfussy design; clear, detailed picture; sounds decent

AGAINST
Contrast could be better; has trouble with rapid on-screen movement

VERDICT
The Yamaha is inoffensive enough, but its pleasant performance isn't going to trouble the top players at this price

Images viewed via the Scart socket are perfectly acceptable – however, switch to sending a PAL progressive signal and there's a boost in image clarity and resolution. It's not going to rival the best DVD players at this price, but there's nothing particularly disturbing about the Yamaha's picture. There's decent depth of field aided by relatively noise-free images. Colours are also handled well, whether it's the lively palette of *Monsters Inc.* or the more natural, human hues of *Hitch*, where skin tones don't seem overcooked or ruddy.

Not quite picture perfect

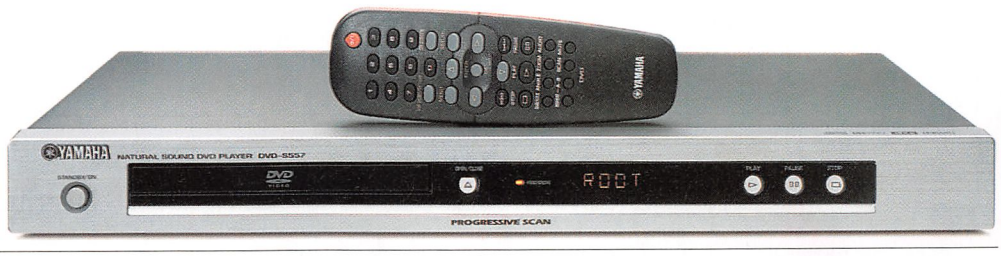
However, we'd like a bit more richness as far as contrast levels are concerned. Also, this player doesn't quite have the same grasp of fast-moving action scenes that the very best are able to attain.

Musically, the Yamaha performs to a reasonable standard. And to get the best sonic performance out of the player, we'd recommend using the Yamaha's upsampling system to convert its sampling rate to 176.4kHz. This imbues music with a greater sense of clarity and space,

> "The picture doesn't rival the best in its class, even though there's nothing really wrong"

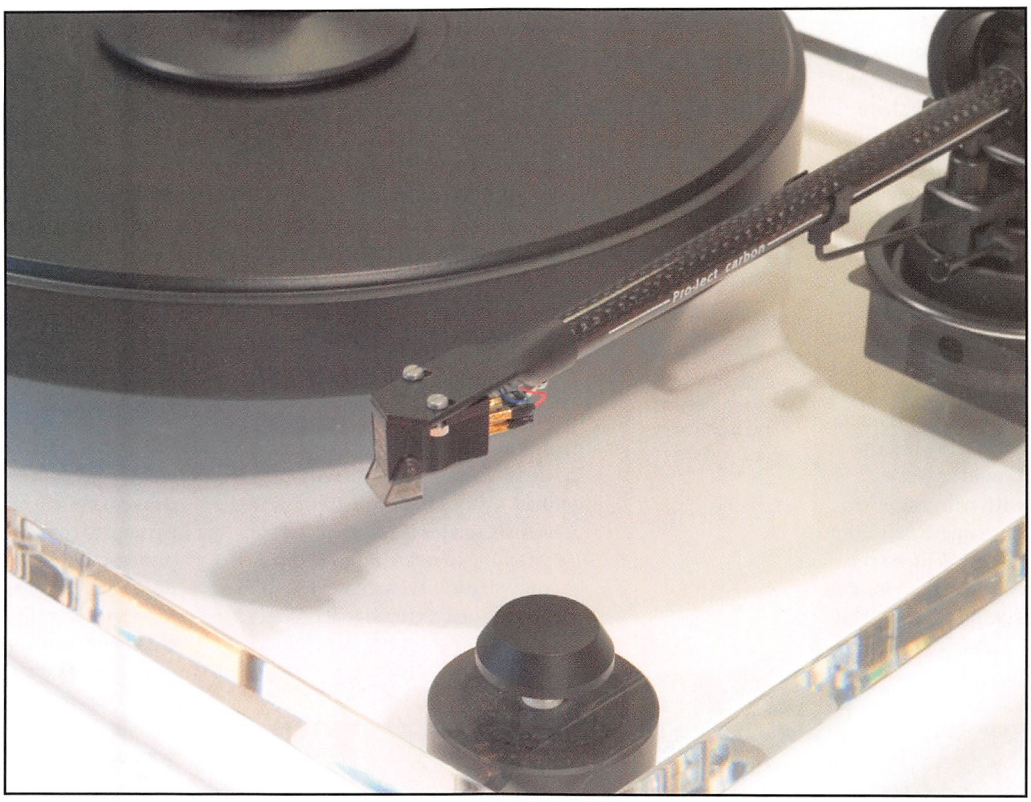
combined with a slight increase in the level of detail and sonci solidity on offer. However, it can't match the very best in this *Group Test*. The top players sound more natural and detailed with both DVD soundtracks and CD playback.

For the money, the DVD-S557 is a decent all-rounder. It just doesn't have the cutting-edge picture or audio ability that its superior cousins are capable of delivering. Check out the Tosh instead.



Though the Yamaha performs to a fairly satisfying level, the excellence and lower prices of the competition put it rather in the shade

The colouration's in the finish



Not in the music

Pro-Ject
AUDIO SYSTEMS

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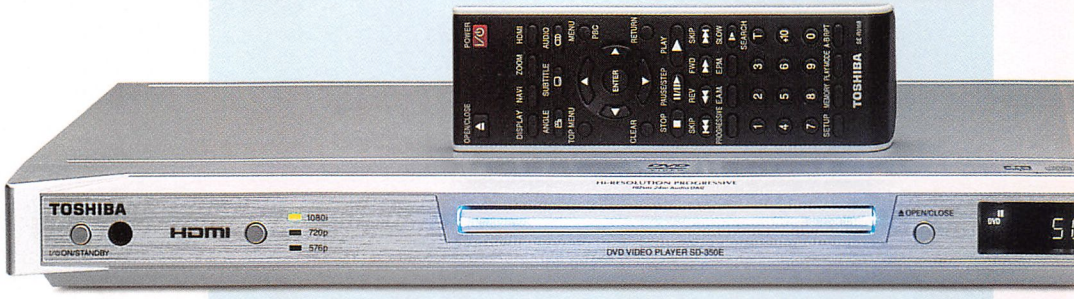
TEST RESULT Two red-hot DVD players, but there can only be one winner: **Toshiba** has the best budget beauty in town

Toshiba SD-350E

★★★★★

£99

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION GROUP TEST WINNER



A PAIR OF threes and a pair of fives. No, we're not talking about a winning hand in poker, but the final star ratings of this DVD player foursome.

The Pioneer and Yamaha models aren't especially poor performers. They do exactly what they say on the box, but don't display sufficient ability to trouble the other two contenders. If you're desperate for a universal player, the DV-585A will do a decent job. It sounds okay, but when it comes to picture quality, you're better off looking elsewhere.

"Separating the top two contenders, the Denon and the Toshiba, is easy"

The Yamaha has fine picture and sound performance, but lacks the sparkle needed to persuade us to part with our cash.

Separating the Denon and the Toshiba was easy, such is the latter's amazing price. And even though its HDMI images weren't especially mindblowing, the Toshiba has the edge over the Denon for pictures. It also provides slightly greater sonic thrills with DVD soundtracks. The Denon's marginally better build isn't reason enough to spend an extra £30.

NOW ADD THESE

32in LCD TV
HITACHI 32LD7200
★★★★★
£1500

No, that's not a mistake – this 32in High-Definition-ready flatscreen television really only costs £1500... and that's before you've shopped around to see if there are any bargains. The 1366 x 768 resolution and an HDMI input help provide you with a stunning picture: detail, deep blacks, stunning contrast, vital colours, and an ultra-stable picture, even with movement.

MULTICHANNEL RECEIVER
DENON AVR-1906
★★★★★
£330

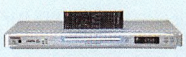
This is an incredibly talented multichannel receiver. Not only does it come with some neat features more commonly found on high-end products – such as the ability to biamp the front two channels for improved stereo sound – it also has a fabulous way with movie soundtracks. Its 80-watts per channel provide power and subtlety in equal quantities.

SPEAKER PACKAGE
B&W MT-20
★★★★★
£975

Style is a matter of taste, but we think you'll like the sleek, understated looks of this compact speaker package. We're certain you'll like its detailed, dynamic sound. Also available are black and white finishes and a £1575 PV1-sub-equipped MT-30 iteration, so there's a choice to suit you.

TOTAL SYSTEM £2904

FACTS AND FIGURES

PRICE RANGE £99 – £130	DENON DVD-1720	PIONEER DV-585A	TOSHIBA SD-350E	YAMAHA DVD-557
SPECIFICATION				
PRICE	£130	£130	£99	£130
PLAYS	DVD,-Video, DVD-R/-RW, DVD+R/+RW, CD-R/-RW, DivX, MP3	DVD, DVD-A, SACD, MP3,DVD-R/-RW, DVD+R/+RW, DivX	DVD, MP3, DVD-R/-RW, DVD+R/+RW, DivX, CD-R/-RW	DVD, MP3, DVD-R/-RW, DVD+R/+RW, DivX, CD-R/-RW
VIDEO OUTPUTS	Component, RGB Scart, S-Video, composite, phono	Component, RGB Scart, S-Video, composite, phono, six-channel	HDMI, component, RGB Scart, S-Video, composite, phono	Component, RGB Scart, S-Video, composite, phono
DIGITAL AUDIO	Optical, coaxial	Optical, coaxial	Coaxial	Optical, coaxial
DOLBY DECODING	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
DTS DECODING	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
PAL/NTSC PROG	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
DIMENSIONS (HWD)	8 x 44 x 31cm	5 x 42 x 22cm	4 x 43 x 20cm	5 x 44 x 31cm
WEIGHT	2.5kg	2kg	1.5kg	3kg
HOW THEY RATED				
PICTURE	★★★★★	★★★☆☆	★★★★★	★★★★☆
SOUND	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆
FEATURES	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★☆☆
VERDICT	★★★★★	★★★☆☆	★★★★★	★★★☆☆

PLAYS Tells you which disc formats your new player is compatible with. All play standard DVDs and CDs. Some also play DVD-A or SACD multichannel music discs (or both) or discs with DivX video or MP3 audio files.

OUTPUTS From best to worst quality you have a choice of the following outputs to connect your DVD player to your TV: HDMI (DVI), component, Scart, S-Video, composite.

DIGITAL AUDIO OUTPUTS All the players are equipped with digital outputs for connecting to an external amplifier. Coaxial is our favoured choice of digital audio connection, but optical provides a high-quality signal, too – especially over longer lengths as might be found in a home-cinema installation.

DOLBY DIGITAL/DTS DECODING Some DVD players have the ability to decode multichannel DVD soundtracks.

NTSC/PAL PROGRESSIVE SCAN Players with this feature are able to convert interlaced pictures into progressively scanned images for compatible displays – giving far better overall picture quality. To take advantage of this feature you must connect your DVD player to your television using component or digital connections. If your television lacks this – say, it only has a Scart input – you can't benefit from progressive scan quality pictures.

PICTURE/SOUND/FEATURES The overall verdict is most dependent on the picture rating.

The latest breed of **CD micros** are small, stylish and packed with goodies – which of this fantastic four will suit you best?

Test Express

MICRO SYSTEMS £200-£480

DAB or MP3 with your micro, sir?

Denon D-M35DAB

★★★★☆ £300

FOR THOSE NEW to the world of micro systems, let us explain Denon's rich heritage. For the past six years a member of Denon's 'D-M' range – last year, it was the D-M31 – has won our best micro Award. Now it's up to this machine to pick up the baton.

Like its ancestors, it's a neat-looking box: it has a simple fascia, clear display (useful for digital radio scrolling information), plus competent build. Some prefer the look of the outgoing model, but we're happy.

We do, however, have concerns about the Denon's optional speakers, the SC-M73s. We eschewed the £80 Denon standmounts in favour of Wharfedale's Diamond 9.0s, and we suggest you do the same. For just £20 more, you get greater dynamics, realism and punch.

However, even with the Diamonds, the D-M35DAB fails to sparkle: Denon has opted for an overly safe sound, meaning that compressed pop CDs sound fine, but more dynamically athletic recordings lack thrills. You get the impression that both rousing classical and beefy hip-hop tunes have to kneel and stoop to enter the Denon's safe sonic tunnel.

This cautious approach makes some sense, as many a D-M35DAB will be destined to spend much of its life sitting in a bedroom or kitchen, churning out chart tunes. However, we miss the old D-M31 more 'grown-up' sound. On a positive note, the new machine's DAB tuner rivals the TEAC's for best-in-test, and with radio or CD you get bucketloads of detail. But overall, while the D-M35DAB is very good, it's not quite a true great. Denon has finally lost its crown.

Denon's addition of a DAB tuner is welcome, but the new, safer sound has lost its vibrancy

FOR
Delivers a large sound from a small body; class-leading detail; very good digital and FM tuners; inoffensive looks

AGAINST
Lacks the get up and go necessary to achieve top-dog status – more dynamic music lack va-va-voom!

VERDICT
Not as dominating as its predecessor, but the D-M35 is still miles better than most micros

Onkyo CR-505DAB

★★★★★ £220

AS WITH THE Denon, we said "thanks, but no thanks" to Onkyo's optional D-S7GX speakers – even at half their £50 price tag they'd be expensive. Add a pair of Wharfedale's Diamond 9.0s and the CR-505DAB reaches sonic heights the Onkyo speakers don't know exist. And, as with any of these systems, use decent speaker cable, such as Chord's fine Carnival Silver, at £6 per metre.

Our next suggestion is to give the machine a decent warm-up, since over a 24-hour period the sound improves dramatically. The end result is zesty, energetic CD delivery with laudable timing. This is a fun player, and it delivers material from classical to rock with admirable enthusiasm. Don't expect huge, room-filling bass, or commanding authority, but do expect a remarkably large soundstage, plus good detail and separation of instruments and voices.

> "The Onkyo gives you a zesty, energetic sound with laudable timing"

Take care, though, if you're the type who often belts it out loud. Crank up the Onkyo's volume and it loses some composure. The Wharfedale Diamonds help minimise matters, but the sound does harden up, with treble becoming a touch aggressive. Its overall sound is well balanced, but the top end is the weak point.

This slightly hard treble makes some digital stations a touch fierce, but on the whole delivery is fine. Add solid build quality and neat finish and you've got a highly competitive wee micro.

Forget the optional speakers and enjoy the Onkyo's upbeat sound and great features. Top value

FOR
Other than at high volumes, the sound is well balanced, with an energetic delivery; solid chassis; excellent price

AGAINST
Lacks some composure at high volumes, when treble hardens

VERDICT
A dinky design that offers a vigorous listen, plus reassuringly solid build – just don't consider the optional loudspeakers

FACTS AND FIGURES

PRICE RANGE £200 – £480	DENON D-M35	ONKYO CR-505DAB	PANASONIC SCPM71SD	TEAC REFERENCE 300MkII
SPECIFICATION				
PRICE	£300	£220	£200	£480
CD	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
MEMORY CARD	No	No	SD, including recording	No
CASSETTE DECK	No	No	Yes	No
DAB	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
FM/MW/SW	Yes /Yes/No	Yes/Yes/No	Yes/Yes/No	Yes/Yes/No
RDS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SPEAKERS	£80 option	£50 option	Yes	No
DIMENSIONS	10 x 21 x 33cm	10 x 21 x 36cm	25 x 18 x 38cm	11 x 22 x 32cm
WEIGHT	4kg	5kg	6kg	N/A
HOW THEY RATED				
SOUND	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★☆☆	★★★★☆
FEATURES	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★☆
BUILD	★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆	★★★★☆
VERDICT	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★★☆

SPEAKERS
The Denon and Onkyo systems can come with speakers, but having tested them we're not keen. A five-star alternative is Wharfedale's £100 Diamond 9.0s (see p14). The TEAC was tested with Diamond 9.0/9.1s. The Panasonic has speakers.

MEMORY CARD
The Panasonic comes with an SD memory card slot. SD cards come in capacities up to 2GB (expect higher soon). You can record AAC audio to an SD card or replay AAC, MP3 or WMA pre-recorded material from it through any compatible SD device.

TUNERS
All but the Panasonic give you access to the wealth of new digital radio stations and DAB's ease-of-use advantages. The analogue tuners all feature RDS (radio data system) FM bands, offering extra inforand radio functions.

TEST RESULT The Onkyo is the new leader of the pack, though all have something to offer you

EACH OF THESE four micros gives a reason to be bought. The cheap Panasonic is a youngster's ideal system: it includes an SD memory card slot, and its five-disc CD changer will keep the bedroom wall thumping for hours on end. The pricey TEAC offers a more mature sound, and as you add better speakers and cables, it sounds even better. The latest Denon DM has great build and tuner reception, with only its safe sonics letting it down. Onkyo's machine is a fab buy: if you're looking for a £200-ish DAB micro, it's the one. Just add Wharfedale's Diamond 9.0s.

Panasonic SCPM71SD

★★★★☆ £200

UNLIKE ITS RIVALS, the Panasonic comes with speakers as standard. We tried adding a pair of Wharfedale Diamond 9.0s, but the SCPM71SD doesn't possess the talent to get the best from them, meaning the extra outlay would be wasted. And, as it stands, the biwired, and biamped Panasonic loudspeakers prove to be a reasonable match for the system.

In addition to speakers, the price includes a five-disc CD changer, cassette player, plus an FM radio. There's no digital radio, admittedly, but the system is compatible with SD memory cards. These cards are postage stamp size plastic cards that can store digital data loaded from various products. Currently available in capacities up to 2GB, you simply insert a card into the Panasonic's SD slot, and you can record a CD there and then. Eject the card, pop it in an SD-compatible player, such as Panasonic's tiny SVSD100V, and you can listen to CDs on the move. It's a super-simple solution, and for existing SD users, it'll be thoroughly tempting.

The SCPM71SD's sound delivery is slightly less persuasive – timing is a bit slow (perhaps all those features slow it up?) and bass is a touch woolly. It also lacks the sparkle available from some rivals, such as the Onkyo. On the plus side, detail levels are reasonable, while vocals sound good and weighty.

Visually, as well as sonically, this machine is a bit tubby, but the speakers look pleasant enough, and include fitted stands. For the money, this is a decent effort, and should appeal to SD memory card devotees.

Sensibly priced and feature-rich, this Panasonic micro system is sure to find plenty of fans

FOR
SD memory card capability; tape deck; five-disc CD changer; the price includes speakers

AGAINST
Sound is a touch leaden-footed, and bass lacks definition; not the prettiest unit

VERDICT
One for the feature fans: if you use SD card kit, this micro makes lots of sense. Otherwise, save up for the Onkyo or Denon

TEAC Reference 300MkII

★★★★☆ £480

OUT OF THE box, this TEAC system pleases. The £140 amp, £150 CD player, and £200 DAB/AM/FM tuner all have brushed-metal fascias and silver cases. Only the amp spoils the visual party somewhat with its mass of protruding buttons. However, the TEAC is the most 'serious' amplifier on test, with 45w per channel, six audio inputs and quality binding posts.

The CD player's drawer action is the smoothest here, and it closes with smile-inducing confidence. This poise continues to the sonic delivery, where the player delivers a big, weighty sound – a definite step up from even the Onkyo. The amp has no problem driving a pair of Wharfedale Diamond 9.0s or 9.1s, though it can be bettered by a Cambridge 540 CD/amp pair (see p6).

> "The DAB reception is excellent, even if you're using a screw-in aerial"

The TEAC's midrange is its best feature: the rich, detailed delivery ensures realistic voices, and this vocal excellence works well with the triband tuner. The DAB section's reception is excellent: even a screw-on aerial gives a robust signal.

Downsides? Spin some hip-hop and you notice the TEAC's bass is a touch loose and timing isn't quite spot on. And, like the Denon, this machine's top end plays it safe – tunes want for sparkling treble. In isolation these shortcomings aren't critical, but overall the TEAC has to lose a star.

Three boxes, classy looks, and a rich and realistic sound please – though minor shortcomings rob it of points

FOR
Big, meaty sound; realistic midrange works well with music and radio; stylish-looking CD player and amp

AGAINST
Slightly safe sound doesn't quite justify the premium price tag

VERDICT
Far better than the average micro, but not cheap, and some might hope for a little more sparkle

From DAB radio to auto set-up and decent music delivery – there's now so much more to bargain **multichannel receivers** than just basic surround sound

Group Test

MULTICHANNEL RECEIVERS £250-£350

Budget receivers now offer even more for less

What's new?

Everything. This test is made up of fresh contenders from all the big manufacturers, and we can't wait to see if the balance of power has shifted away from the likes of Denon and Yamaha to their competitors. With the new Sony being the first budget receiver to include DAB radio, anything is possible!

What do you get for your money?

Just a couple of years ago, you only got features such as auto set-up and the ability to biamp the front pair of speakers on high-end products. Such trickery is now available at around the £300 mark. Of course, the ability to decode every movie soundtrack format out there is a given nowadays as well. And all the manufacturers have made a special effort to improve performance in stereo, and on the whole they've succeeded.

SAVVY SHOPPER

1 Power figures

Don't take these at face value. There are strict standards when it comes to power measurements, but it's easy to manipulate these to get a higher value. Even some of the major names do this to impress. Look out for the figure that is measured from 20 Hz-20 kHz into 8 ohms with around 0.08% distortion.

2 Auto set-up: useful or not?

We like automated set-up systems – they're not perfect, but they're getting better all the time, and some can tell you if your speakers are wired up correctly, too. They're easy to use: just plug in the supplied microphone, and start the procedure. Nothing could be simpler!

3 What is extended surround?

Though most of the amps in this test boast seven discrete channels of amplification, there's no such thing as true 7.1 surround sound. Both Dolby Digital Surround EX and DTS-ES, have six surround channels. The sixth channel of audio information can be used to drive one or two 'centre-rear' surrounds.

RATINGS EXPLAINED

Five stars means that the product is a great all-rounder and is priced competitively. A four-star rating is given to a product that excels in some areas more than others. In some cases a four-star amp will outperform a five-star alternative, so don't ignore it. As the star count drops further, the product goes from one that's average to one to avoid.

★★★★★ Excellent

★★★★☆ Very good

★★★☆☆ Average

★★☆☆☆ Below par

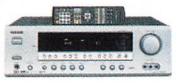
★☆☆☆☆ Don't bother

"All the manufacturers here have also made a special effort to improve the performance of their receivers in stereo, too – and on the whole they've succeeded"

THE CONTENDERS MULTICHANNEL RECEIVERS

Denon AVR-1906
£330
Page 62

Harman Kardon AVR 135
£350
Page 62



Onkyo TX-SR503E
£250
Page 63

Pioneer VSX-915
£300
Page 63

Sony STR-DB895D
£350
Page 64

Yamaha RX-V457
£299
Page 64

JARGON BUSTER

Auto set-up: many budget receivers can be set up automatically, so they give the best sound. See *Glossary*, p186

BUYER'S GUIDE £

For more than 1400 test verdicts, check out our *Buyer's Guide* on p91

Denon AVR-1906

★★★★★ £330

WE DON'T KNOW what they put in the water over at Denon HQ, but it works. The firm has recently been on a staggeringly good run of home cinema form, and if the AVR-1906 is typical, its new receivers are going to be worthy successors to last year's Award-winning trio.

As expected, the feature list is extensive. Highlights include the automated set-up and the ability to reassign the surround-back channels to biamp the front left and right speakers, which improves the performance with stereo music. In a group where some rivals don't even include an on-screen display, Denon should be congratulated for making its product so flexible.

FOR
An excellent all-round performance; automated set-up

AGAINST
Not the best-looking receiver around

VERDICT
This is a great performer for the money and sets a sky-high standard for the rest of the group to try to match

Once up and running, it's impossible not to be impressed by this receiver. Essentially, the AVR-1906 does everything right. Want strong dynamics and the ability to play loudly without distress? This is your amp. It delivers the hell scene from the comic-book flick *Constantine* with real authority and refuses to get aggressive or harden up, even when provoked. A power output of 80-watts per channel isn't anything special in present company, but the new Denon never struggles to deliver either scale or authority when a soundtrack so demands.

The great thing about this receiver is that it combines this muscle with subtlety. Voices come across with naturalness, because unlike most rivals this Denon doesn't ignore nuances in tone or emphasis. Needless to say, any product that enables actors to communicate more directly with the audience is going to make a film – any film – all the more entertaining. The good news continues with a cohesive and stable soundfield that's rich with focused effects.

> "Once up and running, it's impossible not to be impressed by this receiver. Essentially, the AVR-1906 does everything right"

Traditionally, music reproduction has been a weakness with budget receivers, but the AVR-1906 shows just how far affordable models have come. We're not saying the Denon will outwit the best budget stereo amps – no way! – but its grasp of timing and detail resolution is good enough to sound enjoyable.

Complaints? The appearance looks dated to us, and... err... well, that's it! In every other respect this receiver is great for the money. If anything beats this performance, we'll be astonished.

The '1906 continues Denon's incredibly good receiver product range: it sounds like a winner

Harman Kardon AVR 135

★★★★☆ £350

DON'T LET THE low power output of 40 watts per channel put you off. HK is being more honest about its product's power output figures by adopting stricter standards of measurement than some of its rivals. The result is a lower set of numbers, and possibly lost sales, because people might buy simply on spec. We can only applaud the company's honesty, and are pleased to tell you that power figures don't tell the whole story about an amplifier's ability to drive a speaker package – far from it!

> "The HK passes difficult tests of surround ability with ease, creating a proper soundfield"

Hear this Harman Kardon in full flow and you'll quickly understand what we mean. This receiver has a bold, energetic presentation that belies the low output figures and grabs the listener by the scruff of the neck – and doesn't let go until all the fun is over.

This kind of presentation suits a demon-tastic movie like *Constantine* very well, and even works wonders with a more real-world alternative such as *Coach Carter*. This basketball-based flick might not be one of the greats, but the mixture of large-scale auditorium scenes with more low-key dressing room moments makes for a difficult all-round test: one that the AVR 135 passes with ease. It manages to create a proper wrap-around soundfield – something many rivals struggle to achieve. Only the ever-impressive Denon does noticeably better.

The performance with music is strong for a product of this type, too. This should come as no surprise considering Harman Kardon's rich history of producing quality stereo equipment.

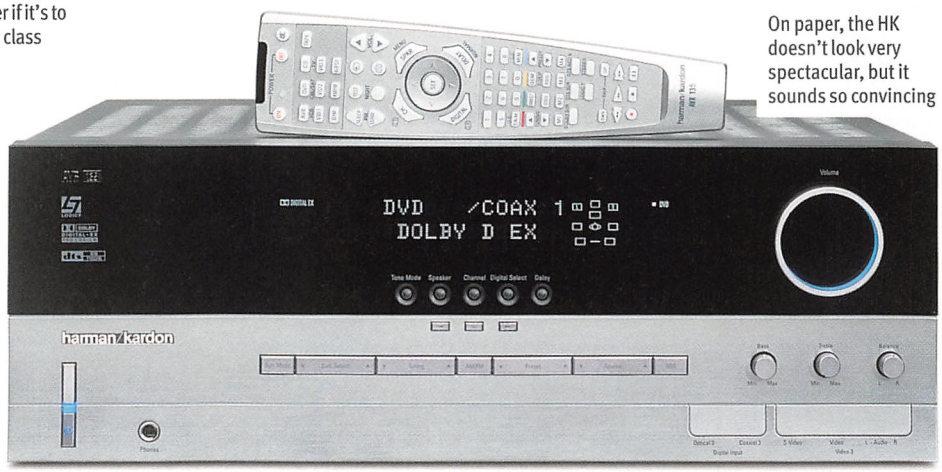
FOR
A likeable and entertaining receiver; fine build, good with music

AGAINST
Set-up could be easier; it's a touch pricey

VERDICT
This Harman Kardon is a strong product, but it need to be cheaper if it's to top the class

Despite all the good news, there are areas where the AVR 135 is finds itself open to criticism. Set-up isn't the easiest around, and the menu logic is a bit of an acquired taste. An instruction manual that makes your eyes glaze over in less than a minute isn't something to boast about either, but we've seen worse over the years – or even over the page, where you'll find a surreal Sony example.

The greatest problem for this Harman Kardon receiver is the strong competition: this AVR 135 is very good, but the Denon AVR-1906 is even better, and it costs £20 less. That's why this fine receiver loses a star.



On paper, the HK doesn't look very spectacular, but it sounds so convincing

Onkyo TX-SR503E

★★★★★

£250

ONKYO SEEMS TO be in a particularly aggressive mood at the moment. After years of producing decent-but-pricey products, the company is getting serious about class-leadership and has come up with the likes of the TX-SR503E.

There's nothing remarkable about this receiver's specification: it has seven discrete channels of power amplification and can accommodate all the essential soundtrack formats, just like most rivals. However, it's one of the best-sounding units in this test and is easily the cheapest: a combination of attributes that's always hard to beat.

There's enough muscle here to convince with the big action scenes of *Constantine*, and enough refinement to keep things listenable, even when the receiver is pushed hard. Onkyo has tuned its product to have a smooth, rich balance, which means that it doesn't have the openness of rivals such as the Sony, but compensates with an easy-going nature that works impressively with a wide range of films and speaker packages. At this price, that's a real plus.

The TX-SR503E copes well with subtleties, too, picking up enough low-level information to convey the differing atmosphere between the rooms in Hitler's bunker in *Downfall*. It's especially apparent as a soldier walks through a cheerful crowd into a high-level meeting with the Nazi hierarchy, where things are far tenser.

Switch to music, and the Onkyo continues to impress. The DVD-Audio of Missy Elliot comes through with a decent dose of punch and power, while *The Revenge of the Sith*'s OST is delivered with authority. There's a shortfall in rhythmic grip compared to the Denon AVR-1906, but considering the £80 difference in price, we can accept that.

> "It's one of the best-sounding and cheapest products here, which is a great combination"

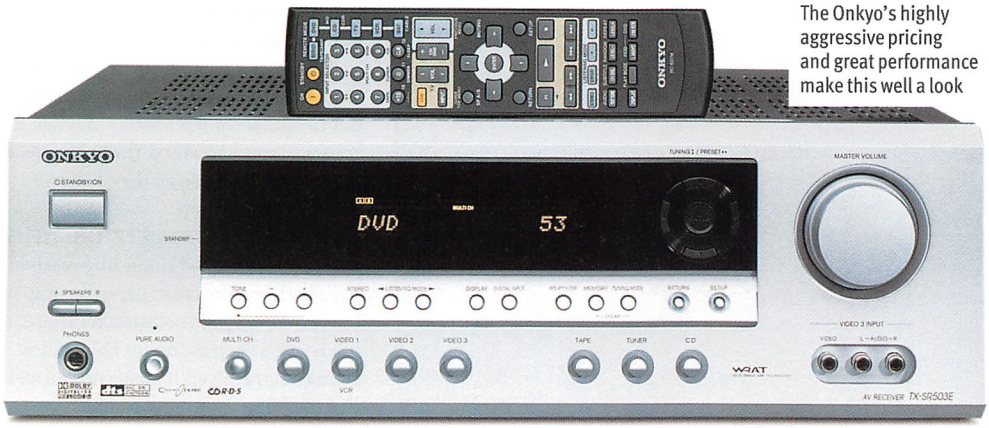
Radio performance is usually an afterthought with products like these, so we're pleased to report that the Onkyo engineers haven't cut corners in this department. Apart from a slightly high level of background hiss, FM comes across with a fair degree of finesse. MW is delivered to an acceptable degree, too, though it's lacking a little clarity by absolute tuner standards.

So there you have it. This is an excellent budget receiver sold at a seriously aggressive price. That might not necessarily be enough to win this test, but we can't deny this is a fab unit.

FOR
Aggressive price; smooth, refined balance; decent radio performance

AGAINST
Sound lacks the openness of some rivals

VERDICT
The TX-SR503E is a cracking receiver – good enough to challenge for top spot



The Onkyo's highly aggressive pricing and great performance make this well a look

Pioneer VSX-915

★★★☆☆

£300

ON PAPER, PIONEER'S VSX-915 looks to have it all. Like the Denon, it has an auto set-up function, but Pioneer's sophisticated system adds speaker equalisation to level and distance adjustments to produce a more neutral tonal balance, regardless of partnering system or room. Like the Denon, you can also reassign the rear surround channels to biamp the front left and right speakers, improving stereo sound.

There are plenty of inputs, plus coverage of all the major processing and decoding modes, including – uniquely here – the ability to decode Windows Media Audio 9 (WMA9) data directly, opening the possibility of using a multimedia PC as another source.

Set-up is easy: using Pioneer's clever automated system, it takes just a few minutes to produce good results. If you fancy a bit of DIY set-up, the menus are clear and work in an intuitive manner – so much so that the likes of Sony and Harman Kardon should take a closer look to see how things should be done.

In fact, everything looks rosy for this Pioneer receiver until you switch it on. Don't get us wrong, it's not that this is a product with no redeeming features – if it were, three stars would be far too generous. Far from it: it's only when you compare it to the best here that you realise how far off the pace it is.

The Pioneer has plenty of muscle and does an exciting job with the likes of *Constantine*. There's no shortage of punch or scale as our hero runs through hell itself, chased by a pack of demons. Add speed, decent resolution and a cohesive soundfield to the list of plus points, too. But that's where the good news ends.

The VSX-915 has a thin, aggressive balance that might impress after a short demo, but it'll annoy you over time. The built-in equalisation can help, but can't hide this receiver's innately brash nature. Listening at high volumes over a long period is a real no-no.

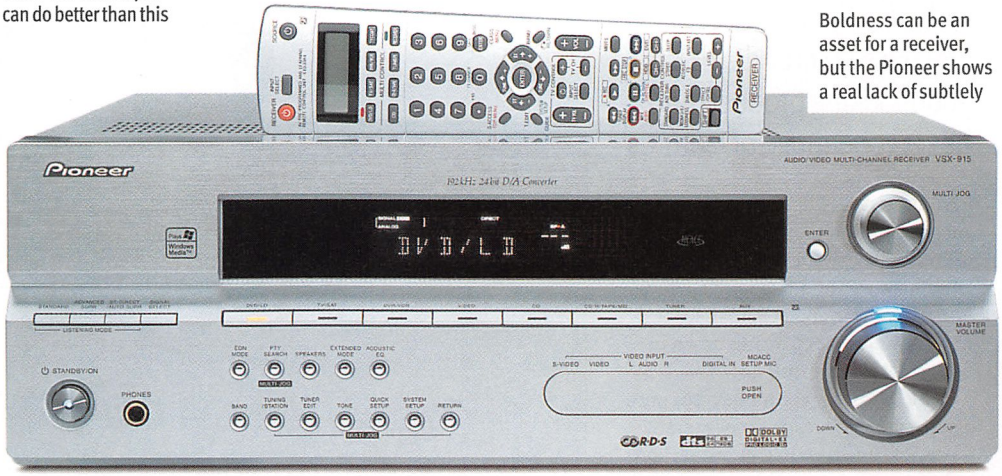
The Pioneer proves that good looks and a comprehensive spec can only get you so far in such a competitive market.

> "Listening to the Pioneer for a long time at high volumes is a real no-no, unless you have a limitless supply of headache pills to munch"

FOR
A breeze to set up; good range of features; exciting performance; WMA9 decoding ability

AGAINST
Over-aggressive sonic balance

VERDICT
Looks great on paper, but disappoints in use. Come on Pioneer, you can do better than this



Boldness can be an asset for a receiver, but the Pioneer shows a real lack of subtlety

Sony STR-DB895D

★★★★☆ £350

LIKE QUICK SOLUTIONS? Here's one. If you want a receiver with DAB radio, buy this Sony. It's the only one here with a digital tuner – and to seal the deal, it does most other things well, too.

The unit is as well built as most of its rivals here, so we don't have any construction worries. Add a good-looking remote handset into the equation and things look pretty positive for this receiver right from the off.

And in general they are, but let's get our major moan out of the way first.

FOR
Includes DAB radio; gives a clean, crisp presentation

AGAINST
Awkward to set up; poor manual; lacks a little sonic warmth; it's a touch pricey

VERDICT
Unless DAB's a must, it doesn't do enough to worry the class-leaders

This Sony is a pig to set up. Its menus are illogical and we spent ages trying to get the thing working as intended. Regular readers will know that we've set up more than a few multichannel receivers in our time, so – without being cocky – one that causes *us* problems is more than likely to do the same for most of you. A poorly written and organised instruction manual doesn't help very much, either.

Having got that gripe off our collective chests, we can report that – once you've got it up and running – the STR-DB895D receiver is a clean and precise performer that digs up loads of detail. It paints a dramatic sonic picture during *Constantine*'s fight scenes and has enough finesse to convey Hitler's breakdown during the last few days of his life in the gripping World War II drama, *Downfall*.

Compared to the very best in the group, this Sony lacks a little natural warmth, sounding too clinical for our tastes. It even gets aggressive if provoked by high volume levels or very demanding scenes. Even so, there's no denying that this receiver still produces an informative and entertaining sound.

> "We've set up more than a few multichannel receivers in our time, so – without trying to sound cocky – if we are struggling, you will too"

The unit's tuner performance is good, too. Perhaps surprisingly, DAB digital has to take second place to FM when it comes to sound quality: the analogue band producing a smoother, fuller-bodied presentation.

To sum up: the Sony STR-DB895D is a solidly made, good-sounding receiver. It's a little expensive in present company, but remains a good solution for those who have a deep desire for DAB radio from their receiver. If that's not a must, there are better designs around.

Sony kit is usually so easy to set up – so we were surprised this receiver proved tricky

Yamaha RX-V457

★★★☆☆ £299

THIS IS SOMETHING of a shocker. We're more used to Yamaha battling Denon for class honours, rather than propping up a *Group Test* from the bottom. What's gone wrong with the RX-V457? In truth, the curious answer is "not a lot".

By class standards, this is a good-looking product. It also has all the essential features you'd expect at this budget price level, though it misses out on an automated set-up and a seventh discrete channel of amplification.

The lack of either of these features isn't disastrous, but their omission suggests that Yamaha has taken its eye off the ball with this one. Under normal circumstances it (along with Denon) is usually the brand responsible for moving upmarket features down to budget levels. Up until now, that is.

> "By class standards, this is a good-looking product, and it has a good range of features"

Build is fair for the money, but once again this unit doesn't set new standards for the price. In fact, we reckon the RX-V457 is arguably the least solid of all our contenders by a narrow margin.

FOR
Good looks; reveals a fair amount of detail; easy to set-up

AGAINST
The quality of the competition is too good for it

VERDICT
The RX-V457 isn't a bad product, but it lacks the talent to impress at this price

The same kind of ho-hum feeling continues when it comes to sound quality. We'd like to make it clear that this isn't a bad product in the sense that it offends when you listen to it. There's no undue aggression or lack of grip when something demanding comes along, and it can imbue soundtracks with a fair amount of excitement and interest.

However, our issue with this Yamaha is more that it doesn't offer anything special for the money. There's none of the clarity of the Sony, and the likes of the Harman Kardon are miles ahead when it comes to communicating the emotion in a movie soundtrack. And that's before we come to the class-leaders like the Denon and Onkyo, both of which thump this receiver for insight and value.

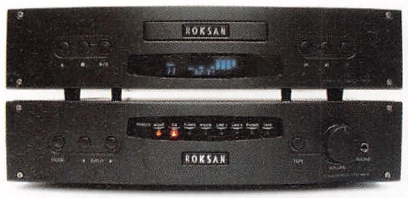
True, the Yamaha's dynamics are good, and the unit reveals a fair amount of detail, but as you might have noticed from reading this test this far, that isn't unusual in this budget receiver class any more. Quite simply, the RX-V457's problem is that it's a decent unit in a class that demands nothing less than excellence. The sooner Yamaha addresses that problem, then the sooner it'll be back at its usual place among the class best.

Average just isn't good enough in this ultra-competitive arena, so last-place beckons

The best of

ROKSAN

Technology



NEW Maths !!!

£650 + £650 = £1000

Maths - Illogical

Saving - Colossal

Experience - Emotional

AWARDS

★★★★★

CD player **INTEGRATED amp**

Kandy MkIII integrated amplifier
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION Winner 2004 Awards

Kandy MkIII CD
HI-FI CHOICE Bronze award 2004 Awards

Kandy MkIII integrated amplifier
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION Winner 2003 Awards

Kandy MkIII integrated amplifier
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION Winner 2002 Awards

Kandy MKIII integrated amplifier
Five Stars
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION October 2003

Kandy CD
Five Stars
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION First test July 2003

Kandy MKIII integrated amplifier
Five Stars
2003 SUPERTEST WINNER (5 Star Gold)
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION May 2003

Kandy Integrated amplifier
Five Stars
2002 SUPERTEST WINNER (5 Star Gold)
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION Feb 2002

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Kandy Integrated amplifier
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BRADFORD 50-52 DARLEY ST, BD1 3HN	01274 733844
BRIGHTON 111 LONDON ROAD, BN1 4JG	01273 679159
CARLISLE 11 WEST TOWER ST, CA3 8QT	01228 510610
CHELTENHAM 22 REGENT ARCADE, GL50 1JZ	01242 222525
CHESTER 15 BRIDGE STREET ROW, CH1 1NW	01244 351122
CHICHESTER 53 EAST ST, PO19 1JG	01243 775540
COLCHESTER 58 HIGH ST, CO1 1DH	01206 548333
CROYDON UNIT 32, CENTRALE SHOPPING CENTRE, CR0 1YA	020 8667 1551
DUNDEE 8 WHITEHALL ST, DD1 4AF	01382 224488
EASTBOURNE 134 TERMINUS ROAD, BN21 3AN	01323 728828
EXETER UNIT 21, HARLEQUINS CENTRE, PAUL ST, EX4 3TT	01392 411164
GLOUCESTER 168-170 SOUTHGATE ST, GL1 2EX	01452 312198
GUILDFORD 19 TUNSGATE, GU1 3QS	01483 300606
HANLEY 74-78 PICCADILLY, ST1 1EF	01782 214069
HARROGATE 19-21, COMMERCIAL ST, HG1 1UB	01423 569249
HAVERFORDWEST 21 QUAY ST, SA61 1BD	01437 760101
HENDON UNIT E1 (D), BRENT CROSS SHOPPING CENTRE, NW4 3FP	020 8202 1257
HENLEY-ON-THAMES 23 DUKE ST, RG9 1UR	01491 572122
HEREFORD 32 EIGN GATE, HR4 0AB	01432 268922
HITCHIN 35 HERMITAGE ROAD, SG5 1BZ	01462 434537
HORSHAM 4 PIRIES PLACE, RH12 1EH	01403 249222
HOUNSLOW 45 HIGH ST, TW3 1RH	020 8577 7722
INVERNESS 112 ACADEMY ST, IV1 1LX	01463 716646
KINGSTON UPON THAMES 25a FIFE ROAD, KT1 1SB	020 8541 1188
LEICESTER 24 MARKET ST, LE1 6DP	01162 540600
LINCOLN 155 HIGH ST, LN5 7AA	01522 528577
LIVINGSTON 9 ALMONDVALE SOUTH, EH54 6NB	01506 442622
LLANELLI BUSH HOUSE, 10 THOMAS ST, SA15 3JA	01554 777086
MILTON KEYNES 65 MIDSUMMER PLACE, MK9 3GB	08456 340370
NEWPORT 1 CAMBRIAN ROAD, NP20 4AE	01633 212321
NEWTON ABBOT 62 QUEEN ST, TQ12 2EW	01626 366266
PAIGNTON 8 TORQUAY ROAD, TQ3 3AB	01803 558429
PAISLEY 32 HIGH ST, PA1 2BZ	0141 887 7025
PERTH 13 CHARLOTTE ST, PH1 5LZ	01738 566566
PINNER 30 BRIDGE ST, HA5 3JF	020 8866 2474
PLYMOUTH 56 CORNWALL ST, PL1 1LR	01752 250571
SHEFFIELD 60-62 PINSTONE ST, S1 2HN	01142 737575
ST.ALBANS 20 CHEQUER ST, AL1 3YD	01727 830777
STAINES UNIT T3 TILLY'S LANE, TWO RIVERS, TW18 4BL	01784 493777
STIRLING 35 KING ST, FK8 1DN	01786 448888
STOURBRIDGE 35 MARKET ST, DY8 1AB	01384 443363
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SWANSEA PHOENIX WAY, SWANSEA ENTERPRISE PARK, SA7 9EH	01792 773644
TAUNTON THE BARNS, HANKRIDGE WAY, TA1 2LR	01823 444600
TORQUAY FLEET ST, TQ1 1BG	01803 201801
WALSALL 35-37 BRIDGE ST, WS1 1DP	01922 709291
WATFORD UNIT 28, THE HARLEQUIN LOWER MALL, WD17 2TE	01923 281140
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ideas for life

TEST RESULT In the highly competitive world of **multichannel receivers** we have two faves: a cut-price option, and one for those who want the best

OUR BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT is the Yamaha RX-V457: better performance can be had for less money. The Pioneer is also a let-down: the spec includes auto set-up, but it sounds unnecessarily aggressive. Sony's DAB-ready STR-DB895D looks great on paper, but it has poor set-up menus and a sound that needs more expression. The Harman Kardon is basic compared to most rivals, but its upbeat sound is a real pleasure to listen to.

"If you can stretch an extra £50 to buy the Denon, do so – it's the best by miles"

The two top buys in this group are the Onkyo and the Denon. The Onkyo is great value and gives little away to the likes of the Sony and HK when it comes to sound or build quality. Yet it costs £100 less, and that's what earns it the full five-star rating. However, if you can stretch to the Denon, do so – we think it's the best-performing receiver here by miles!

Denon AVR-1906

★★★★★

£330

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION GROUP TEST WINNER

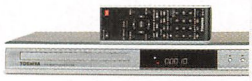
NOW ADD THESE

SCREEN
JVC LT-32DS
★★★★★
£ 2000

JVC's recent TV efforts haven't been that hot, but the LT-32DS makes up for that. This 32in LCD delivers everything we'd hope for from a set at this price level. It is, of course, High-Definition-ready and has both digital and analogue tuners. The real clincher is picture quality, which is about as good as things get at this price.

SPEAKER PACKAGE
Epos ELS3 5.1
★★★★★
£ 956

This isn't the most stylish speaker package around, but it is arguably the best-sounding £1000 combination around. The satellites are big enough to produce a full-bodied dynamic midrange and the subwoofer is as musical as they come. Action films are delivered with a solid dose of punch.



DVD PLAYER
TOSHIBA SD-150E
★★★★★
£ 50

How good can a £50 DVD player be? Answer: very good indeed. The SD-150E will worry most machines up to the £200 mark. Colours are vivid and detail levels high. Sound is fair for the price and build acceptable. It's a class DVD for peanuts!

TOTAL SYSTEM £3336

FACTS AND FIGURES

PRICE RANGE £250 – £350	DENON AVR-1906	HARMAN KARDON AVR 135	ONKYO TX-SR03E	PIONEER VSX-915	SONY STR-DB895D	YAMAHA RX-V457
SPECIFICATION						
PRICE	£ 330	£ 350	£ 250	£ 300	£ 350	£ 299
TUNER	FM/MW	FM/MW	FM/MW	FM/MW	DAB/FM/MW	FM/MW
CHANNELS/POWER	7 x 80 watts	6 x 40 watts	7 x 75 watts	7 x 100 watts	7 x 100 watts	6 x 85 watts
PROCESSING/ DECODING MODES	Dolby Pro-Logic II, Dolby Pro-Logic IIx, Dolby Digital EX, DTS NEO:6, DTS-ES Matrix 6.1, DTS-ES Discrete 6.1, DTS 96/24	Dolby Pro-Logic II, Dolby Digital EX, DTS NEO:6, DTS-ES Matrix 6.1, DTS-ES Discrete 6.1, Logic 7	Dolby Pro-Logic II, Dolby Pro-Logic IIx, Dolby Digital EX, DTS NEO:6, DTS-ES Matrix 6.1, DTS-ES Discrete 6.1, DTS 96/24	Dolby Pro-Logic II, Dolby Pro-Logic IIx, Dolby Digital EX, DTS NEO:6, DTS-ES Matrix 6.1, DTS-ES Discrete 6.1, WMA9	Dolby Pro-Logic II, Dolby Pro-Logic IIx, Dolby Digital EX, DTS NEO:6, DTS-ES Matrix 6.1, DTS-ES Discrete 6.1, DTS 96/24	Dolby Pro-Logic II, Dolby Pro-Logic IIx, Dolby Digital EX, DTS NEO:6, DTS-ES Matrix 6.1, DTS-ES Discrete 6.1, DTS 96/24
EXTERNAL INPUTS	7 stereo line-level + 6-channel	7 stereo line-level + 8-channel	5 stereo line-level + 6-channel	6 stereo line-level + 6-channel	7 stereo line-level + 6-channel	6 stereo line-level + 6-channel
PREOUT	8-channel	None	None	8-channel	None	None
DIGITAL AUDIO IN	2 x coaxial, 3 x optical	3 x coaxial, 3 x optical	1 x coaxial, 3 x optical	2 x coaxial, 3 x optical	2 x coaxial, 4 x optical	1 x coaxial, 2 x optical
DIGITAL AUDIO OUT	1 x optical	1 x coaxial, 1 x optical	None	1 x optical	1 x optical	1 x optical
VIDEO INPUTS	3 x component, 4 x S-Video, 5 x composite	2 x component, 4 x S-Video, 4 x composite	3 x component, 3 x S-Video, 4 x composite	3 x component, 4 x S-Video, 4 x composite	2 x component, 4 x S-Video, 5 x composite	2 x component, 3 x S-Video, 4 x composite
AUTO SET-UP	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
SIZE/WEIGHT	15 x 44 x 42cm/12kg	17 x 44 x 38cm/11kg	15 x 44 x 37/10kg	15 x 44 x 37/10kg	16 x 43 x 40/14kg	16 x 44 x 42/11kg
HOW THEY RATED						
SOUND	★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★☆☆	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆
BUILD	★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆
FEATURES	★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆
VERDICT	★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★☆☆	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆

If you haven't the space or budget for a separates set-up, check out one of these superb **one-box** home cinema systems

Group Test

HOME CINEMA IN A BOX £400-£600

Simple cinema, sorted!

What's new?

Rival manufacturers' desire to oust Denon from the home-cinema-in-a-box throne is nothing new. On this occasion, there are completely new models from JBL and Sony thrown into the mix, along with a new wireless version of a Panasonic package we reviewed in wired form a couple of months ago. These systems use DVD, amplification and speaker technology that's pretty well tried and tested – even the wirelessness has been done before – so expect quality!

What do you get for your money?

Short of a screen, you get everything that's required to get a home cinema system up and running – even down to speaker cable. The Sony system leads the value-for-money pack with its tall, well-built speakers. In every case, though, there's an awful lot of equipment to be had for the money. Only the quality differs.

SAVVY SHOPPER

1 What do I need to get started?

Do you have a television or display of some kind? Do you have a spare mains socket or two? Yes? These self-contained systems offer everything else you need to get started, including cables.

2 Which factors count the most?

We've assessed picture and sound quality, build integrity and overall value for money to see which of these systems is most worthy of your cash. Features are secondary to performance in our book: we think the most important factor for all these packages is that they should produce a thrilling home cinema experience. Aesthetically, of course, everything's a matter of taste, as long as it feels respectably solid and professional.

3 Is your room ready?

These systems will suit anything from small- to medium-sized living rooms (and are ideal second-room set-ups, too), but may struggle to fill a larger lounge. If trailing cables are an issue, consider the Sony's wire-hiding option or – if you must – Panasonic's wireless rears.

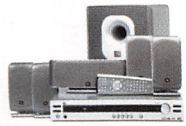
"Short of a screen (and we recommend one of those on p73), these packages provide everything you will need to get your home cinema system up and running – even speaker cable"

RATINGS EXPLAINED

Five stars is a truly impressive tally in this test, as there are so many areas where an all-in-one system can fall down. Four stars indicates good overall performance, and is still well worth a look. A three-star product is solid, but has some notable flaws, while two-star devices won't hold your attention for long. We'd suggest you avoid one-star systems completely.

★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Don't bother

THE CONTENDERS



JBL DSC 1000
£400
Page 69

Sony DAV-500ZF
£449
Page 69

Denon DHT-500SD
£500
Page 71

Panasonic SC-HT880W
£600
Page 71

JARGON BUSTER

Component: Our choice of connection for transferring video from your system to your TV

BUYER'S GUIDE

For more than 1400 test verdicts, check out our Buyer's Guide on p91

JBL DSC 1000

★★★☆☆ £400

MOST RECENTLY, JBL has been seen within our pages as a manufacturer of petite, portable loudspeaker systems for MP3 players. However, the company (part of the vast Harman Group) has been building studio and cinema speakers since the 1950s. So how does this package combine that sonic flair with DVD-quality vision?

Well, JBL's system is unique among models in this test in one respect: it includes an active subwoofer. That

> "The sound has plenty of punch, with the subwoofer muscling in on the action"

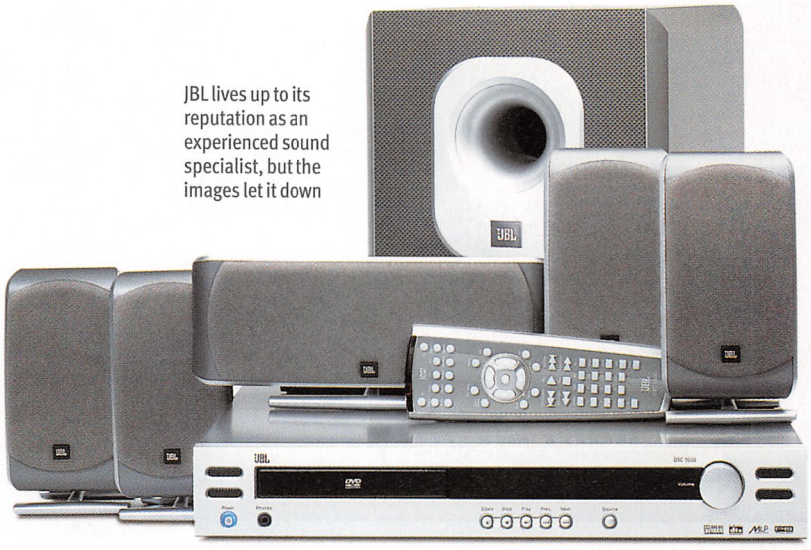
means its subwoofer has amplification built in, which should mean more oomph at the bottom end. There's also a volume control on the subwoofer, meaning it should be easier to tweak the settings to get the sub's integration with the rest of the speakers spot on.

Out of the box, the JBL system doesn't have quite the same aesthetic appeal of some of the others here, feeling cheap by comparison. "It is cheap" is the obvious retort – however, even accounting for the bargain price, we still found the exterior rather uninspiring.

FOR
Neighbour-annoying power and bottom end thud; dynamic and detailed sound; cheap

AGAINST
Unstable picture is a victim of noise and grain; speakers are on the harsh side

VERDICT
Decent sonically, but delivers a pretty disappointing picture



JBL lives up to its reputation as an experienced sound specialist, but the images let it down

It's also a bit clunky to operate, even if the menus themselves are much more endearing to the eye than the casing. They're well organised, too, and the ability to predefine different surround modes for each input is a neat touch.

Coach Carter provides a decent test visually and sonically, with plenty of fast-paced basketball scenes and a thumping hip-hop soundtrack. And thumping is the word – this system isn't subtle! Give this JBL plenty of time to run in, and you banish the speakers' initial harshness. You'll find there's plenty of punch, with the sub particularly eager to muscle in on the action, even when it's not strictly welcome.

Rein things in using the subwoofer's individual volume control and things become more manageable. It's still 'in yer face', but it's decent enough at this price.

The picture department is where the JBL really lets things slip. Image edges are fluid rather than firm, while the overall picture is prone to an alarming amount of flicker. Noise and grain are apparent, too, while the colour balance is poor.

This JBL system's pictures just aren't in the same class as those produced by the other packages tested here. It's a shame – not least for the speakers, which are worthy of better partners.

Sony DAV-500ZF

★★★★★ £449

THIS SONY SYSTEM'S set-up is utterly idiot-proof, even if it is a bit time-consuming. The tall, thin speakers come with the option of either stands (as pictured), or plinths for mounting on existing stands. The wiring can be hidden, which is great, and the end result is a smart-looking system that's very easy on the eye, even if it doesn't have quite the same ultra-solid feel as the slightly pricier Denon overleaf.

> "We have little in the way of criticism for this system: it's a barnstorming performer"

Straight out of the box, both the picture and sound quality are startling. The speakers integrate seamlessly: the handover to the subwoofer is smooth, and there's genuine depth to the bass.

Given time to run in, the system sits as happy as the proverbial Larry. Sonically, the Sony has the balance of a gymnast, and the agility, too. Treble is detailed, clear and crisp without being overly harsh (even at loud volumes), while the midrange sees vocals full of expression, but still bedded happily into its surroundings. So, what of the picture?

FOR
Brilliant, sharp image; superbly integrated speakers; impressive dynamics; weight and control from subwoofer

AGAINST
Simple but slow to assemble; sub can be sluggish with music

VERDICT
This is a stunning system – sound and vision quality are a clear notch up on the rest of the class

Monsters Inc. does its best to make any DVD player look good, but the DAV-500ZF needs no help. Using the component connection – enabling progressive scan – the picture is strikingly sharp and clear from the off. Edges are firm and stable, and there's admirable depth to the image presented – even distant objects are rendered with detail and credible precision. Colours are vivid and involving without being lurid, and though black detail could perhaps be more insightful – a common shortcoming of budget systems – this is a brilliant picture that gives bags of pleasure.

As you can see, we have little in the way of criticism for the DAV-500ZF. Sonically and visually this is a barnstorming performer, which coupled with Sony's trademark usability and appealing design makes this a serious threat to Denon's cinema system crown.

Well-equipped, easy to set up, neat styling – and great performance, too

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Denon DHT-500SD

★★★★★ £500

YOU ONLY NEED take this Denon system out of its box to be quickly reminded why it's lingered so long as the budget one-box system of choice. Last year's Product of the Year winner is a fine, well-made package: it's attractive, but also reassuringly solid.

Unlike many products at this price, which use acres of plastic in their construction, the Denon makes heavy use of cherry-wood veneer for the speakers. It also has visual discretion, despite – as we're later reminded – packing plenty of performance punch.

> "Even fast-moving images, such as the jet-ski scene in Hitch with the delectable Eva Mendes, can't nudge the Denon out of kilter"

Connections come in the predictable shape of component, S-Video, RGB Scart and composite outputs. We recommend component outputs, allowing the Denon system to make use of its performance-enhancing progressive-scan technology.

FOR
Great performance, build and looks; well equipped, and offers 6.1 upgrade path

AGAINST
The bass could go a bit deeper and treble can be a little harsh

VERDICT
The Denon quickly reveals why it's the current Award-winner: it looks, feels and sound fantastic

Last year's Award-winning system at its price level, the Denon still does a lot of things really well

Will Smith's latest funny, *Hitch*, shows up the Denon's attention to detail. Skin tones, always a tricky test, are delivered with plenty of insight and depth, while colours are balanced and natural.

Even fast-moving images, such as the jet-ski scene with the delectable Eva Mendes, can't nudge the Denon out of its perfectly poised state. There's no judder or blurring to be found here. Yes, some noise will crop up in the distance of more challenging, expansive shots, but let's not forget this is a system costing the eminently affordable sum of £500.

Fire up something a little more explosive – we opted for the last days of Hitler in *Downfall* – and the sonic ability of the DHT-500SD shines, too. Authoritative, dynamic and excellent timing – it ticks our boxes, so to speak. The passive subwoofer doesn't quite extend as deeply as we'd like, and at loud volumes treble can be a touch harsh, but at this price we're nit-picking.

The Denon system also offers an upgrade path to 6.1 performance, using Denon-supplied speakers – admittedly, at the cost of £250. And when even an audio CD played in stereo gets your feet tapping, you know you're onto a good thing. It'll need a cracking system to knock it off the top of the pile.

Panasonic SC-HT880W

★★★☆☆ £600

THIS NEW OFFERING from Panasonic is essentially a 'wireless' version of the £500 SC-HT880 system, reviewed in July (also three stars). The wireless aspect is that the two rear speakers don't need connecting to the main unit. Each is connected to a wireless receiver, which sits anywhere between the two, and receives the signal from a card in the back of the main unit. This means there's no speaker cable trailing from the front to the back of your room.

Out of the box, the Panasonic gives the same woeful first impression that its older sibling did. The chipboard finish to the sub is bafflingly bad, while the speaker stands feel flimsy and look cheap. The unsightly screws don't help matters, nor the fiddly construction.

> "We were unable to get the sub at the right level – it was either too loud or too quiet"

Loading *Hitch* into the DVD tray (which feels like it might snap off if you drop the disc in from too high), we hoped for better performance.

FOR
Decent picture; impressive satellites and surround steering; wireless rear speakers

AGAINST
Disappointing build quality; centre channel lets the rest down; sub settings are clumsy; slightly expensive

VERDICT
The fine wireless rear speakers will rightly tempt some people, but other aspects of the system mean we would look elsewhere

Fortunately, the picture goes some way to repairing the damage: colours are bright and stable, contrast is decent, and detail and depth of field aren't far off the best of those on test here.

Sonically, the Panasonic is harder to praise. The centre channel is the most obvious weakness, sounding detached and distant from the other speakers, as well as from the picture itself. The result is dialogue that fails to bed in happily with the rest of the system. The bottom end of the Panasonic was also found wanting – four rather crude presets left us unable to get the sub at the right level: it's too loud or too quiet. However, in fairness, the surround channels work well, with good detail and steering.

However, despite the attraction of its good picture and its wireless rear speaker system, the SC-HT880W is too sonically compromised to justify its price. We'd suggest you shop elsewhere.

One of the better pictures in this test, but not the sound – or build – to match

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TEST RESULT Even though two of these products earn a full complement of five stars, there can only be one winner – the **Sony**

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION GROUP TEST WINNER

Sony DAV-500ZF

★★★★★

£449

THESE FOUR CONTENDERS split neatly (we like neatness) into two groups based on their star ratings. Two products earn an underwhelming three stars, while two earn the full five. It's obvious which group our winner will come from.

But first let's look at the also-rans. Interestingly, we reckon we could create a pretty good system if we used the base unit of the Panasonic and the speakers from the JBL. The JBL's strengths are its forthright subwoofer, supplying oodles of bass, and eager sound. Where it falls down is its picture, which is woeful.

The Panasonic suffers in the sound department. The centre channel is detached and weak, and the sub either disappears or dominates proceedings. It does manage a decent picture, though.

> "The Sony system gives better sound and vision – there's no question that it's our choice"

Both the Denon and the Sony deserve their five-star status: they offer great sound and picture quality, as well being built to a standard exceeding what you might expect from a £500 package.

However, the Sony system gives better sound and pictures, it's as simple as that. And if you want the best, it's the choice.

NOW ADD THIS

32in LCD TELEVISION

HITACHI 32LD7200

★★★★★

£ 1500

This high-def ready Hitachi flatscreen has all the sockets you need to take advantages of the Sony's superb picture – plus its HDMI socket is tailor-made for the HDTV set-top boxes due from next year. It also boasts elegant looks that match the Sony for style.

TOTAL SYSTEM £1949

FACTS AND FIGURES

PRICE RANGE £400 – £600	JBL DSC 1000	SONY DAV-500ZF	DENON DHT-500SD	PANASONIC SC-HT880W
SPECIFICATION				
PRICE	£ 400	£ 449	£ 500	£ 600
RECORDING	No	No	No	No
PLAYBACK	DVD-Video, DVD-Audio, DVD-R/-RW, DVD+R/RW, CD, CD-R/-RW, SVCD, VCD, MP3, JPEG, WMA	DVD-Video, DVD-R/-RW, DVD+R/+RW, CD, CD-R/-RW, SVCD, VCD, MP3, JPEG	DVD-Video, DVD-R/-RW, DVD+R/+RW, CD, CD-R/-RW, SVCD, VCD, MP3, JPEG, WMA	DVD-Video, DVD-Audio, DVD-R/-RW, DVD+R/+RW
TUNERS	FM	RDS FM/MW	RDS FM/AM	RDS FM/MW
PROGRESSIVE SCAN	PAL/NTSC	PAL/NTSC	PAL/NTSC	PAL/NTSC
DIGITAL OUTPUTS	Coaxial, optical	Coaxial, optical	Coaxial, optical	Coaxial, optical
ANALOGUE OUTPUTS	Component, RGB Scart, S-Video, composite	Component, RGB Scart, subwoofer preout, headphone	Component, RGB Scart, S-Video, composite, headphone	Component, RGB Scart, S-Video, composite, sub preout, headphone
DIGITAL AUDIO IN	Optical, coaxial	No	Optical, coaxial	No
DECODING	Dolby Digital, Dolby Pro-Logic II, DTS	Dolby Digital, Dolby Pro-Logic II, DTS	Dolby Digital, Dolby Pro-Logic II, DTS	Dolby Digital, Dolby Pro-Logic II, DTS
SIZE (HWD) / WEIGHT				
MAIN	43x8x35cm / 9kg	7x43x38cm / 0.5kg	8x43x37cm / 5kg	6x43x35cm/3kg
SATELLITE	18x10x9cm / 1.5kg	10x9x11cm / 0.5kg	21x7x16cm / 1kg	123x26x27cm/4kg
CENTRE	10x29x9cm / 1kg	10x9x11cm / 0.5kg	7x21x16cm / 1kg	9x32x10cm/1kg
SUB	41x28x35cm / 13kg	38x17x40cm / 7kg	32x21x35cm / 6kg	20x41x50cm/ 14kg
HOW THEY RATED				
PICTURE	★★☆☆☆	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★☆
SOUND	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★☆☆☆
FEATURES	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
VERDICT	★★★☆☆	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★☆☆

The latest **media centre PCs** have a real can-do attitude: they play CDs and MP3s, DVDs, and you can watch telly on them, not to mention recording to hard-disk, DVD or CD...

Test Express

MEDIA CENTRE PCs £799-£1229

Windows to another world?

HP M7041

★★★★☆ £799

THIS TOWER PC from Hewlett-Packard is no great shakes in the looks department, which isn't ideal if you plan to keep it in your living room. Looks apart, it's a powerful PC that comes with Microsoft's Windows Media Center software. Like all Media Center PCs, the HP includes a tuner – in this case analogue, though a digital unit is an option. This means that as well as the regular functions of a modern computer – CD/DVD/MP3 player/recorder – it can record TV to DVD or hard-disk as well.

The picture from DVDs is good: with *Constantine* you see decent detail and smooth motion, even if there is a touch of on-screen noise. Broadcast TV pictures aren't as good, certainly not as good as those from the Elonex.

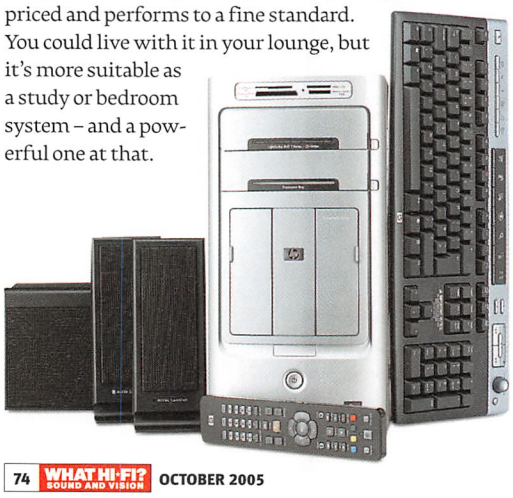
Recordings are stored on an 200GB hard disk and, at the lowest compression, picture quality matches that of the tuner – which isn't amazing, but the small amount of noise doesn't spoil viewing. A figure of 100 hours of recording is realistic, and adding more hard-disk space via USB or FireWire is simple enough. The supplied speakers aren't great, an upgrade improving matters.

Apart from the speakers, this HP package is well priced and performs to a fine standard. You could live with it in your lounge, but it's more suitable as a study or bedroom system – and a powerful one at that.

FOR
Feature packed; decent picture quality; easy to use; price

AGAINST
Traditional PC looks; sound isn't that great

VERDICT
A reasonably priced, decent performer that bridges the gap between PC and home cinema



HP uses a tower format for its PC, making it a bit ugly, but easy to maintain and upgrade

Elonex Artisan LX

★★★★★ £999

IN CONTRAST WITH the HP, Elonex's PC – which also runs Media Center – looks like a home cinema product. Build quality is excellent, and the neat black finish and easy-access controls add to the perceived value.

Like the HP, the Artisan has a ferocious arsenal of functions: it has a DVD/CD player, CD/DVD and hard-disk (200GB) recording via twin analogue TV tuners. And that's before you've considered that it's a 3GHz Pentium 4 PC with 512MB of RAM, upgradeable to 4GB.

> "Windows Media Center software is surprisingly user-friendly and stable"

Connectivity is great if you have a display with a digital input as there's a DVI video output. Next-best is the S-Video socket, through which the quality drops.

Stick with DVI, though, and every aspect of the Artisan works well. The TV picture is decent, and recordings are faithful to hard disk, DVD-R/-RW or +R/+RW. The CD player sounds great with all styles of music, and it's very subtle for a machine of this type.

Whatever you think of Microsoft, its Media Center operating system is totally punter-friendly and stable enough to live with happily in the long term.

If you're in the market for a new PC, but are tempted by a minimalist lifestyle, audition the Artisan and kill several birds with one stone. It's highly recommended.

FOR
Bags of features; good looks; decent sound; solid performance across the board

AGAINST
The picture performance can be rather average unless you use the DVI output

VERDICT
A home entertainment solution built without compromise, and at a fair price

Elonex packs bags of functionality into this tempting black box, and it has the performance to match

FACTS AND FIGURES

PRICE RANGE £799 – £1229	HP M7041	ELONEX ARTISAN LX	HI-GRADE DMS II	SONY VAIO FS215Z
SPECIFICATION				
PRICE	£799	£999	£1099	£1229
OPERATING SYSTEM	Media Center 2005	Media Center 2005	Media Center 2005	Windows XP, Vaio World
PROCESSOR	2.4GHz AMD 64	3GHz Pentium 4	3.4GHz Pentium 4	2GHz Pentium Mobile
SUPPLIED RAM	512MB	512MB	512MB	1GB
HARD DRIVE	200GB	200GB	250GB	100GB
COMPATIBILITY	DVD-Video, DVD-R/-RW, DVD+R/+RW, CD, CD-R/-W	DVD-Video, DVD-R/-RW, DVD+R/+RW, CD, CD-R/RW	DVD-Video, DVD-R/-RW, CD, CD-R/-RW	DVD-Video, DVD-R/-RW, DVD+R/+RW, CD, CD-R-RW
TUNER	Analogue	Twin analogue	Twin analogue	Analogue
INPUTS	6 x USB, RF, 2 x FireWire, 2 x S-Video, 2 x composite, RCA, mic	6 x USB, 2 x RF, 2 x FireWire, RCA, optical digital, mic	4 x USB, 2 x RF, 3 x FireWire, 2 x S-Video, 2 x composite, RCA, mic	3 x USB, S-Video, RF, RCA, microphone
OUTPUTS	S-Video, composite, coaxial digital, RCA	DVI, S-Video, coaxial/ optical digital, line level, analogue surround, RCA	DVI, 2 x S-Video, composite, coaxial/optical surround, RCA, 'phone	VGA, S-Video, optical digital, stereo analogue, headphone
INTERFACE	Wireless keyboard and mouse	Wireless keyboard with joystick mouse	Infrared wireless keyboard with trackball	15in screen, stereo speakers, docking station
HOW THEY RATED				
PICTURE	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆
SOUND	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★☆☆
VERDICT	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆

TEST RESULT Good-looks and high performance mean **Elonex** has a winner with its Artisan LX

NONE OF THESE products disgraces itself: the Sony only gets three stars, but that's because it's not ideally suited to life in a home cinema set-up. It would work fairly well in a study or bedroom, though there are cheaper ways of achieving the same thing.

The HP tower could work as a main home-entertainment system, though its average looks and only fair performance mean we might be tempted to spend more, or restrict it to working in a bedroom or study.

Neither the Elonex nor the Hi Grade looks like a PC, but they are – powerful PCs that also work extremely well as televisions, digital audio and video recorders and players. And the winner? The Elonex gets it by a length…

Hi Grade DMS II

★★★★☆ £1099

LIKE THE ELONEX, this PC looks like a home cinema or hi-fi product on the outside, though its internal organs are much more sophisticated than a standalone DVD player.

This Hi Grade computer also runs Media Center, and has bucketloads of features, together with good connectivity. All of the essentials features – CD/DVD/ hard disk playback and recording – work well, too. The DVD picture is good, though not as good as that from the Elonex, displaying a small amount of on-screen noise. There's also a certain amount of image instability with DVDs and broadcast TV via the twin analogue tuners. However, the flaws aren't major, and pictures are generally well balanced and an enjoyable watch.

> "The Hi Grade's sound is steered with superb precision and punch"

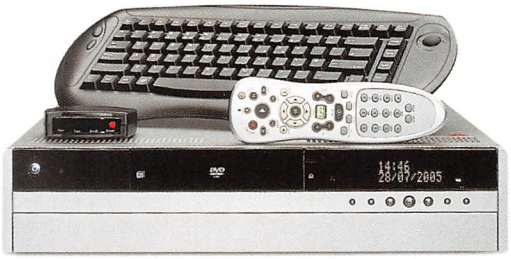
The DMS II is blessed with good sound. Rig it up to an external AV receiver, via the coaxial connection on the rear panel, and the sound is steered with great precision and punch. Though it wouldn't match a high-quality budget CD player, such as the Cambridge Audio kit on p6, it beats many DVD players for music use.

Hi Grade has produced a solid performer, which only falls slightly short of the best. However, its extra 50GB hard disk space isn't enough to justify the £100 premium over the Elonex, so that fifth star eludes it.

FOR
Good DVD playback; decent connectivity; powerful PC; well sized package

AGAINST
Bland looks; price, that's pretty much it

VERDICT
This is a good unit that's let down by the price and looks, though it also doesn't perform quite as well as the best



A good-looking exterior hides a versatile and high performance interior – though the Elonex edges it

Sony Vaio FS215Z

★★★☆☆ £1229

A LAPTOP PC as the hub of your home entertainment system? That's what Sony is trying with its laptop-plus-dock solution. Unfortunately, it's a compromise.

The Sony is the only product here that doesn't use Window Media Center, though its Vaio-specific software is easy enough to use. It's basically a good-quality laptop that comes with a TV tuner-enabled docking station with some powerful stereo speakers, too. This means the Vaio remains a sleek, portable (at just 3kg) design for when you want to take it on the move.

DVDs on the built-in 15in screen look good: little noise is present and black definition impresses. The analogue tuner wasn't enabled in our sample, but this function, alongside the DVD and hard-disk recording, should allow you to watch last night's telly on the train.

There's no digital video connection, however, which makes viewing High Def content a no-no. When watching a DVD on a large display the picture is poor, with a distressing amount of on-screen noise.

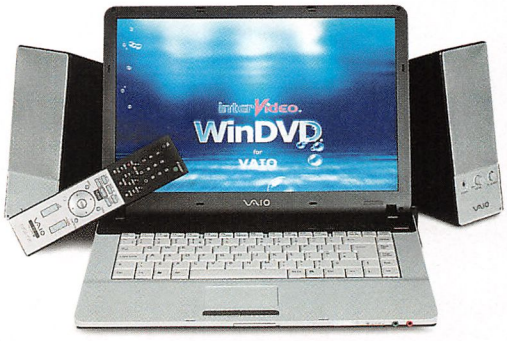
The sound quality when connected to the dock is surprisingly high: the stereo speakers deliver both music and movie soundtracks with ease. A good amount of detail is conveyed, coupled with deep tuneful bass and a sweet expressive midrange.

This is much more a high-powered laptop than home cinema solution. We didn't enjoy watching DVDs on a large screen, and that seems a pretty basic failing.

FOR
Proper one-box solution; portability; good sound; fine image on its own screen

AGAINST
Picture and sound quality become highly compromised on a larger scale. No digital video out

VERDICT
Sony has had to compromise with this unit, and it doesn't really work to the highest standard



Built-in speakers and a 15in monitor make this a good standalone unit, but large-screen images are poor

TURNTABLE
CLEARAUDIO
AMBIENT/SATISFY/
CONCERTO

★★★★★

£4040

FOR

Thrilling delivery; sweet, open treble; spacious, detailed soundstage; looks

AGAINST

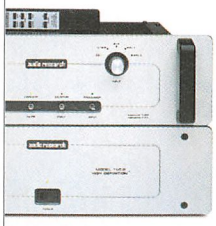
Not without rivals; width; you wouldn't want to break a £1200 stylus

VERDICT

Beautifully built, and a joy to use and hear

TURNTABLE
Clearaudio Ambient
£4040

STEREO AMPLIFIER
Primaluna Prologue One
£3499 Page 78



PRE/POWER AMPLIFIER
Audio Research LS16MkII/150.2
£849 Page 79

Temptations

THE WORLD'S MOST DESIRABLE KIT UNCOVERED

Babe, the deck's on fire

Clearaudio's new **Ambient** turntable, together with a **Satisfy Carbon Directwire** tonearm, and **Concerto** cartridge is a deck we'd happily listen to all day – even with Nick Cave playing

FORGET CLEARAUDIO'S NEW Ambient turntable, for a moment, and let's discuss Mr Nicholas Edward Cave. Along with his band, the (awfully good) Bad Seeds, the Australian created *Nocturama*, one of 2003's great albums. Beautifully produced and featuring Cave's incredibly emotive vocals, the set is one of our ultimate testers. Most testing of all, though, is the epic closing track *Babe, I'm On Fire*. At over 15 minutes long, this track is an exhausting yet exhilarating listen.

Ambient creates order out of chaos

So what has this all got to do with Clearaudio's new Ambient turntable, you ask? Well, played on the majority of hi-fi kit, the tune's rampaging bass, crashing cymbals, lashings of feedback and frantic vocals result in a chaotic, confused soundstage, bass that bounces around like a teenager's dodgem car, and treble that could neatly slice left-in-the-sun-for-a-week Parmesan cheese. Not good, in other words… that is, until you play the same track on the Ambient. Complete with the £555 Satisfy Carbon Directwire tonearm, plus a rather splendid £1200 (yes, £1200) Concerto cartridge, the deck manages to deliver an overwhelmingly good performance.

From the mass of drums, guitar, percussion and violin, it's possible to pick out every individual instrument, note and nuance. However, this space isn't at the expense of integration: while the soundstage is both wide and deep, the Clearaudio expertly knits together lower, middle and higher frequencies. The result is awesome!

> "The Ambient extracts every single nuance and note from the complexity"

Of course, you might not listen to Nick Cave or his Bad Seeds. Perhaps you prefer a bit of classical, or maybe dance tunes are more your mug of PG Tips? No matter, this Clearaudio package loves all musical genres: Orff's *Carmina Burana* receives the dynamic reach and impact it deserves, while Christopher and Raphael Just's *Popper* 12-inch sounds more banging than a five-year-old with a hammer and a tin box. Bass is big, midrange emotive and treble is sweet and open. It's just wonderful!

Glorious though this set-up sounds, you first have to first put in a bit of work. To our relief, set-up is pretty simple, but from fresh both the deck and cartridge require at least 24 hours constant run-in. Over time, bass becomes faster, tighter and more musical. Integration and timing improve, too – while the soundstage yawns, stretches its arms, and creates more space.

So what's not to love?

Well we can't complain about the looks: the 'Panzerholz' – 70 layers of wood and resin – perfectly sets off the deck's aluminium plates and elegant arm. Usability is also neat – there's an automatic speed change plus LED display. However, the overall package, including the motor, might prove too wide for many hi-fi racks. Also, the motor's two tiny speed-adjustment holes could be a little bit cleaner. When it comes to sound, our only suggestion is, if you value voices over all else, compare this deck directly with Origin Live's Sovereign. You might prefer the Origin. Us? We'd be absurdly ecstatic with either.

TECH SPECS

SPEEDS
33 1/3, 45 RPM
ELECTRIC SPEED CHANGE Yes
MANUAL OPERATION Yes
TONEARM INCLUDED Yes (for £555)
CARTRIDGE INCLUDED Yes (£1200 option)
BELT DRIVE Yes
DRIVE SYSTEM
Decoupled synchronous motor in separate plinth
DIMENSIONS (HWD)
15 x 54 x 33cm
WEIGHT
4kg (turntable), 340g (tonearm)

The Ambient chassis is built from a high-tech sandwich of wood and plastic resin between two precision-machined aluminium plates

Valve-va-voom!

It sounds slicker than an oiled otter and looks like it should have a four-figure price tag. Say hello to PrimaLuna's extraordinary **Prologue One** valve amp

STEREO AMPLIFIER
PRIMALUNA
PROLOGUE ONE
★★★★½
£849

FOR
Lovely build; an enjoyably smooth and fluid sound; price

AGAINST
Not the last word in bass control

VERDICT
This PrimaLuna is superb value and a great entry into the world of valve amps

"Get ready to sit back and luxuriate in smooth, warm sounds that stir the heart"

VALVE AMP FANS will know sub-£1000 designs are a rarity. We haven't reviewed one for years, and those we know of aren't particularly well-built or sonic champions in any regard.

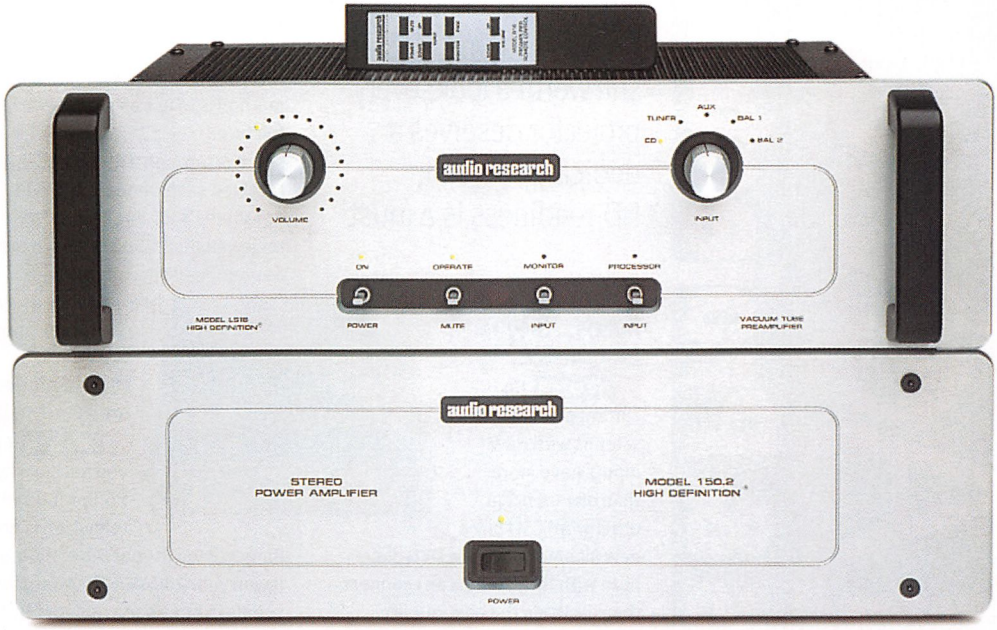
The Prologue One is different. Its ultra-competitive price is thanks to it being built in China (to Dutch company PrimaLuna's design), but there's no outward sign of cost-cutting. Its beautifully finished casework and solid controls are worthy of multi-thousand-pound amps.

PrimaLuna has judged the design superbly. An all-valve amp with just 35 watts per channel is never going to challenge conventional transistor designs when it comes to power or low-frequency grip, so the company hasn't even tried. Listen to something really demanding – try Massive Attack's *Angel* or Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* – and shortfalls in bass control and slam are clear.

Equally clear are the reasons many people feel valve technology continues to have much to offer. The sound is full-bodied and fluid in a way that makes almost every rival amp seem mechanical in comparison. Listen to Cat Stevens' *Father And Son*, and the Prologue One delivers his impassioned vocals with breathtaking skill. There's absolutely no trace of harshness and high frequencies are smooth. Timing is good enough to convey the momentum of the faster-paced *Matthew & Son*, though never threatens the superior accuracy of similarly priced transistor rivals from the likes of Cyrus and Naim.

The same could be said for detail levels: they're good but not class-leading. Those looking for an amplifier to analyse recordings should look elsewhere. This hot-running integrated is more for those who want to sit back and luxuriate in smooth, warm sounds that stir the heart.

Use easy-to-drive speakers and there's not much at this kind of price that will deliver the Prologue One's blend of talents in a more convincing way.

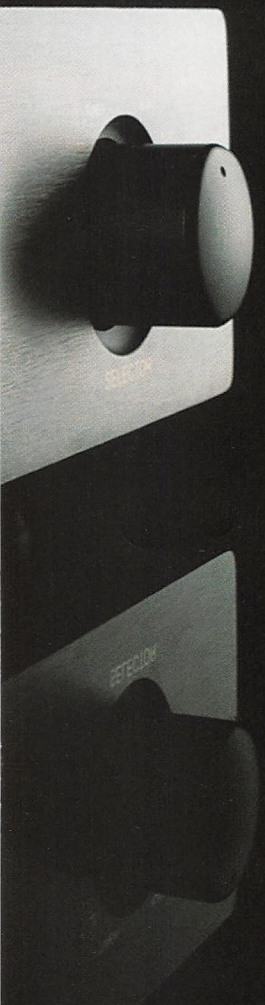


Back to the future

This **Audio Research** amplifer combination is a bizarre but enchanting mix of ancient and modern

TECH SPECS

LINE LEVEL INPUTS
Four single-ended RCA
PHONO STAGE
No
OUTPUTS
None
TAPE LOOPS
One
REMOTE CONTROL
No
HEADPHONE OUTPUT
No
DIMENSIONS (HWD)
29 x 38 x 20 cm
POWER OUTPUT
35 watts per channel
WEIGHT 15kg



The Prologue One boasts beautifully finished casework and solid controls – amazing for £849

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE AUDIO Research just because its styling hasn't developed in over 20 years: behind the old-fashioned fascias of the LS16 Mk II/150.2 combo sit bang up-to-date electronics created with some serious free-thinking.

The preamp is a valve unit controlled by clever electronics to make ownership as painless as a transistor alternative. For example, there's a soft-start function that prolongs valve life and ensures the circuits are stable to prevent any unwanted noise. Those four front panel toggle switches may look just like the ones used decades ago, but that's as close as the similarity gets, as they merely click sending a signal to the central processor. Things get even more interesting with the 150.2 power amp. As the name implies this is a 150-watt per channel stereo amp, but what isn't immediately apparent is that it is uses Class T digital circuits. The use of digital circuitry is radical in the conservative world of high-end amplification, and the fact that it's Audio Research doing it is even more revolutionary.

The incongruity of using a valve preamp with a cutting-edge digital power amp would strike many as odd, but it shows the brand's interest lies in sonic performance rather than dogmatic adherence to any specific technology.

Those who know Audio Research will find this pre/power's sonic signature familiar. There's no exaggeration, and no attempt to make a recording more exciting than it actually is. Instead, both components live up to the brand's High Definition slogan by digging up lots of detail and presenting it a totally natural and unforced manner. Listen to India Arie's *Ready for Love* from her debut set, and this pairing delivers her vocals with unnerving presence and the kind of full-bodied solidity that never comes cheaply. Close your eyes and it's hard to believe she isn't in the room with you: it's this kind of sonic magic that goes a long way to justifying the hefty price tag.

> "Closing your eyes, it is hard to believe that the singer isn't in the vicinity"

Switch to something larger scale, like Tchaikovsky's *Maché Slave Op.31,* and this combo responds with enough power, scale and authority to blitz most rivals. The tonal balance is spot on, refinement is top class and the soundstage is layered better than an Eskimo on a cold day.

However, the LS16Mk II/150.2 isn't perfect. Its refined nature comes at the expense of rhythmic drive and slam, so hard-charging music such as Nirvana's *Nevermind* or the Gorillaz's *Demon Days* lose some impact.

Even so, this pairing remains a highly tempting proposition. Partnered with equally capable kit it promises years of service and a sonic performance that will never fail to impress in its own understated way. Give it a go!

PRE/POWER AMP
AUDIO RESEARCH
LS16MKII/150.2
★★★★½
£3499

FOR
A detailed, unexaggerated presentation that has long-term appeal; fine build; the prestige of the Audio Research name

AGAINST
Those wanting the ultimate in timing or punch (or ultra-modern styling) should look elsewhere

VERDICT
This Audio Research is a fine combination that promises years of sonic pleasure. Don't let the conservative styling put you off

Sound Advice

HOME CINEMA | HI-FI | MP3 | READER RESCUE

TVs & Projectors

7 pages of expert advice from the best team in the business. Whatever your movie or music system query, we're here to help

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision
38-42 Hampton Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0JE
For TV & projector queries email
tvanswers@haynet.com
(sorry no personal replies)

Q&A Multiple HDMI sockets please; some CRTs are still worth a look; every projector deserves a dedicated screen; HD-readiness is a must

HDMIs... they're everywhere!

PROBLEM Do current plasma screens with HDMI inputs have more than one input? In other words, if I buy a new plasma and a new DVD player both with HDMI outs, can I connect them both via the best-quality connection. Or do I have to unplug one before using another, or worse, use a lesser connection for one?

SOLUTION The only occasion you might require more than one HDMI input is when you have more than one HDMI-equipped source. With the 2006 advent of Sky's (most likely) HDMI-equipped High-Definition set-top-box, plus the proliferation of extremely affordable HDMI-equipped DVD players, that scenario is perfectly possible. Add an HD camcorder, and/or games console and you're looking at increasing demand for HDMI ins. There are four methods of coping with demand. The first involves simply unplugging and plugging as required, but that's a hassle. Alternatively, the 32in, 37in and 42in models from Toshiba's new WLT58 LCD TV range all feature twin HDMI inputs. We'll be reviewing them very soon. Another method is to use an HDMI switcher (pictured, see p28), or route the sources through a dual HDMI input receiver, such Denon's AVC-A11 or Yamaha's RX-V4600RDS. We reviewed the £2500 Denon in our September issue, and we'll be reviewing the new Yamaha next month.

The king is dead, long live the king!

PROBLEM Can you tell me why the Philips 32PW9509 television is no longer listed in your *Buyer's Guide*? It won your 2004 CRT TV Award, but it seems to have been replaced by the Panasonic TX-32DTX40. Which is the better television out of the two?

SOLUTION Philips has ceased making the 32PW9509, and the TV is shortly due to be replaced – so we have removed it from our *Buyer's Guide*. However, as with most outgoing products, there are still some models available on the high street. As for which is the better TV out of the Philips and the Panasonic (pictured, right) you mention, we suggest you look at it this way: the Panasonic offers two features the Philips misses, namely a built-in digital TV

I MUST HAVE A FAB FLATSCREEN!

PROBLEM I'd like to know which is better: an LCD or a plasma? I'm looking at an LCD Philips 30PF9975, or a 32in or 42in plasma. My budget is between £2000 and £2500. My main use for either screen will be watching Sky Digital. Also, I'm concerned about buying a plasma, because I'm worried logos will burn the screen.

SOLUTION Don't worry about screen burn. Some early plasmas, especially those use in commercial environments, suffered from this problem, but that was more down to users leaving static images in place for days on end, rather than a problem with the technology itself. A number of our reviewers are lucky enough to have used plasmas at home for many moons, and none report any screen-burn problems.

However, your selection is pretty much driven by screen size. Presently the best value 42in

PLAYLIST

Want to test your display's picture quality? Invest in these great discs

HITCH
This is the kind of film that has made Will Smith a very wealthy man. And why not – he does do it so well. It's mushy, it's 'feel-good', but it's pretty good, too. Rich, lush colours mean this DVD is as easy on the eye as it is on the brain – should you engage it.

MOST TESTING SCENE
Chapter 12 – Some high-speed jet-ski action will test your system's motion-handling and sniff out any judder
VISION 2.40:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1
★★★★½

COACH CARTER
Not everyone's bag, admittedly, but the highly-paced basketball scenes, complete with squeaking trainers, will keep your system on its toes.
VISION 2.40:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1
★★★★½

CASINO: SE
A masterpiece in film-making, flash suits and tremendously terrifying torture. Bright lights and brighter clothes should make your system shine.
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1
★★★★★

MOTORHEAD: STAGE FIGHT
Lemmy and bad hair pals are worshipped by fans, resplendent in hi-def. Well, on the DVD-ROM anyway. Slamming sound, too.
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1, DTS
★★★★★

MARC BOLAN AND T-REX: BORN TO BOOGIE
Who likes to boogie? Yes, we like to boogie. Especially in high definition – long may music DVDs blaze the trail.
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1, DTS
★★★★½

Panasonic's Viera range of plasma has thrown up some excellent screens, such as this 42in beauty

screens are plasmas, while the vast majority of 32in-and-below slimlines are LCDs. If you plan lots of gaming and PC use, in addition to watching Sky, we suggest an LCD TV – LCD's higher resolution over plasma means it's more suited to these tasks.

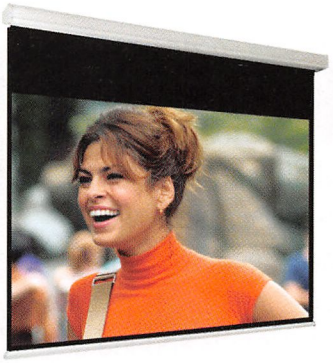
However, if you're sticking to purely TV and movie watching, we suggest you go for a larger screen, and that would mean a plasma. The best plasmas in your price range are Panasonic's phenomenally good TH-42PV500, plus the Pioneer PDP-435XDE. The Pioneer model will soon be replaced, so look out for tasty deals. On the LCD side, we suggest you look at the Philips 32PF9986 or the JVC LT-32DS. Also keep an eye out for Panasonic's latest 32in Viera LCD. We've reviewed the TX-26LXD500, and it's excellent, so hopefully its big brother will be, too. And all these televisions are High-Def ready, too.

tuner, and a set of component inputs. If either of those factors appeals, go for the Panasonic. Otherwise, the Philips is the king for performance.

Does a projector really need a dedicated screen?

PROBLEM I'm putting together a home cinema system – including a projector. Can I use my flat, white, living room wall instead of a screen?

SOLUTION Quick answer? Yes, you can but it's not a great idea. Why? The picture will look immeasurably better on a projector screen. Why not head down to a dealer and ask for a demo? Displaying one of today's excellent projectors in the wall is the equivalent of skiing wearing slippers instead of ski boots – it saves money, but your enjoyment is seriously curtailed. The Cinemax PSE211 from Elegance (pictured above) was reviewed very favourably last month, and costs under a grand. For more, information, see the panel, right.



Is an HD Ready badge necessary?

PROBLEM I'd like my new TV to be ready for High Definition. I've been to a couple of shops and they told me that to be truly HDTV ready it must have the 'HD Ready' badge on it. I'm thinking of buying on the internet.

SOLUTION We think you're wise to opt for an HD-ready TV. However, we also feel you should visit a dealer and demo some sets. You can't beat actually seeing, and using, a set. Plus a dealer can offer invaluable advice, and if something goes wrong, you know exactly who to contact.

When it comes to HD-Ready status, we follow the requirements set by EICTA (the European Information & Communications Technology Association). You can visit *www.eicta.org* for detailed info. If you see the HD Ready badge you know the set meets its High-Definition TV requirements. TVs without the badge *might* be HD Ready, but check the specs very carefully.

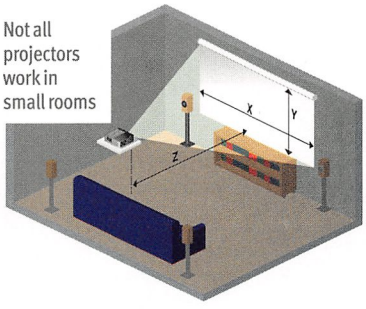
KNOW HOW Projector screens beat white walls!

Get the best from your big-screen machine...

PROJECTORS SCREENS ROCK!
You can buy screens in the standard 16:9 shape, or 1.78:1. Or if you prefer, in wider 'movie-aspect' shapes, such as 1.85:1 (letterbox). We recommend a standard 1.78:1 shape, which gives black bars with ultra-wide cinemascope movies, plus with both off-air TV watching, and anamorphically enhanced letterbox DVDs, you get a full-screen image.

CHOOSE THE CORRECT CONSTRUCTION
Different projection technologies require different types of screen. Screen reflectivity is measured in 'gain' and high gain is important in rooms that are not properly dark. On the other hand, combine a high-gain screen with a highly bright projector, and you're in for trouble. Consult your dealer on this. Another thing: the larger the screen, the brighter your projector will need to be.

DROP-DOWN, FIXED OR PERFORATED?
Fixed designs, which need to be attached permanently to the wall, are cheapest. A fixed screen also allows for a perfectly flat picture. Drop-down screens (like the Elegance screen, above-left) can be manual or motorised. Pricey, perforated screens have holes to allow sound to pass through, which means you can position your speakers behind the screen.



Not all projectors work in small rooms

CHECK THE PROJECTOR'S THROW RATIO
Some projectors need to be placed some way from your screen to display a picture of any size. To check the suitability of your intended purchase, work out the width of the image you want (X, above), then multiply that figure by the lowest number quoted as the projector's throw ratio in our Buyer's Guide (eg, 1.8). This will give you the minimum distance (Z, above) it needs to be away from the screen.

IF YOU WANT TO BUY... CRT TVs

SO IS IT TRUE 'BIG IS BEAUTIFUL'?
Cathode Ray Tube (CRT) technology means a big, fat chassis – none of your svelte LCD six-packs here. However, a CRT, placed in a room corner, doesn't demand much extra floor space over a similarly wide LCD TV. So why not super-size your screen with a 36in CRT?

SHOP TILL YOU DROP...
CRTs are being phased out in favour of slimline LCDs and plasmas, but there's nothing wrong with the outgoing technology – the TVs simply don't look as sexy and light LCDs are cheaper to ship. Hit the high street and you'll find there are some stunning CRT television deals.

EXTRAS, EXTRAS!
Many CRTs offers shed loads of extras, such as a digital tuner or sound enhancing gizmos, but only buy those you will use. If you've already got a set-top box, why pay for a digital tuner? Similarly, if you have a separate 5.1 sound system, why pay for a Dolby 5.1 TV?

DON'T EXPECT HIGH-DEF
High-definition-ready CRT sets have been a reality over in the United States – where High-Def television has been available for some time. However, over here in Europe HD-ready CRTs just haven't been developed. There are some that'll do some of the job, but that's all.

Many CRT TV sets can still produce a picture that will shame the majority of flat-screen TVs

Q&A I need a new home cinema receiver; what's with these speakers on the walls; a new DVD player needed; speaker cables and problems with digital inputs abound...

A receiver replacement?

SYSTEM Sony Triniton 29in TV, Marantz PM-50 integrated amplifier, Onkyo ES-600PRO surround processor, Pioneer DV-533 DVD player, JVC HR-J52MS VCR, Philips DMT-DV3 digibox, KEF Q1 front speakers, Wharfedale rear speakers

PROBLEM I'd like to replace my amp and processor with a modern AV receiver, and I'd like to add a centre loudspeaker, too.

SOLUTION You don't specify a budget, but given the sort of speakers and DVD player you're using, we recommend you consider the Denon AVR-2105 (£450) and Yamaha's DSP-AX757SE (£500, below), which are both ideal foils for your (front)

speakers. Rein in the spending a little and Denon's AVR-1905 (£300) has a strong case. Quite how you've managed without a centre speaker is anyone's guess, but better late than never – tonal equity with the front speakers is essential, so KEF's £150 iQ2c centre speaker is the one to buy.

What's with the speakers?

PROBLEM Why do so many home cinema pictures place the rear loudspeakers high on the back wall?

SOLUTION First, as they're likely to be sited behind your seated position, your rears need to be well clear of your soft furnishings (specifically the back of your sofa) or a lot of the sound information will go missing.

Second, this method of mounting better reproduces the acoustics of a 'real' cinema. You're supposed to be bathed in an ambient surround soundfield, rather than alarmed by direct sounds. Getting your rear speakers up high (and therefore further away from your ears) helps reduce that problem.

Cables that'll keep it tight?

SYSTEM Denon AVC-A 10SE amp, B&W DM603 S2, DM601 S2, LCR 6S2 and ASW500 5.1

PROBLEM What sort of cables should I get for this set-up? I need a clear, lean sound with tight, low bass.

SOLUTION That's some pretty capable kit – as far as speaker cable goes, we wouldn't suggest anything less than Chord Company's Carnival Silver Plus at £5.50/metre, and the same company's Rumour 4 (£21.50/metre) would really bring out the best of your equipment.

Help with a DVD decision?

PROBLEM I need a DVD player. I like the look of Samsung's DVD-HD945, but I've also been offered a secondhand Denon DVD-2900. I want to be able to play multichannel music. In fact, the system will play music three-quarters of the time.

SOLUTION As far as DVD players go, we can't really suggest that you buy one without a digital (HDMI or DVI) output – these outputs are becoming increasingly ubiquitous and any new television you buy in the future will undoubtedly have a corresponding input.

For that reason, while the Denon player you mention is a class act, and will certainly deliver a good level of musicality, we're not entirely comfortable recommending it. The latest incarnation of the machine you're considering, the DVD-2910

WE'RE HERE TO HELP
What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision
38-42 Hampton Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0JE
For home cinema queries email
cinemaanswers@haynet.com
(sorry no personal replies)

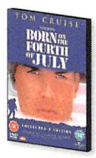
PLAYLIST

The new movies that will showcase your surround sound system

THE INTERPRETER
Nicole Kidman dons the mantle of UN interpreter in this superior genre flick. Don't dwell on the plot holes, instead revel in the absolutely superb effects-steering, dynamic pyrotechnics and all-round inventive sound-tracking. Your system will have to shift those effects from speaker to speaker with alacrity if this is going to work.
MOST TESTING SCENE
Chapter One's brutal murder scene is a stern test of steering.
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1
★★★★½

CONSTANTINE
This month's utterly preposterous Keanu Reeves vehicle is a lazy science fiction epic. The plot doesn't bear discussion but the fantastically muscular soundtrack does. You'll hate this movie, but your subwoofer will love it.
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1
★★☆☆☆

TOTAL RECALL: SE
Before Keanu there was Arnold. Loathe him or loathe him, you can't ignore the fact that this Special Edition is a sophisticated test of dynamics and, perversely, subtle detail retrieval. The wordy dialogue will test soundstaging and definition nicely, too.
VISION 1.85:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1
★★★☆☆



BORN ON THE 4TH JULY: SE
The SE treatment for Tom'n'Ollie's worthy, worthwhile anti-Vietnam diatribe. An average picture transfer is more than compensated for by a typically brazen soundtrack, ready to examine your system's grip, speed and punch.
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1, DTS
★★★★☆

JAWS: SE
Though the shark still looks pitiful, the score is still the creepiest thing this side of *Psycho*. Despite some good sub workouts, it's mostly music and dialogue – but a complex soundtrack nonetheless. Will pick out holes in poor systems.
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1, DTS
★★★★★

(£600, left) is a handy music source like its forebear, but crucially also includes HDMI and DVI outputs. You're likely to find it for significantly less cash if you shop around, and in our view it's the best long-term bet.

Digital connections giving me all kinds of trouble!

SYSTEM Pacific HCS-101 AV amp
PROBLEM Can I make connections to both the coaxial and optical connections on my Dolby Digital amplifier at the same time, say for a DVD player and DVD recorder?

SOLUTION There's no problem making both optical and coaxial connections simultaneously: on a top-end system, you could find as many as eight or nine digital connections linked at once.

Any issues to be mindful of? Only one: it could be that your DVD recorder only has an optical digital output, but that the corresponding digital input on your amp is a coaxial design. Worry not: on most modern amps, you can electronically 'reassign' the digital input you want to use, so you can apply coaxial inputs to sources previously assigned to optical sockets, or vice-versa. Quality cables, like the £50 Ixos XHD-608-100 (below), are vital.

Denon's DHT500SD is a current Award-winner. Check out p68 to see how it fares against the latest competition

A HOME CINEMA PACKAGE TO MATCH MY NEW LCD?

SYSTEM Philips 32PF9986 LCD television – arriving any day!
PROBLEM As soon as my screen arrives (thanks for the recommendation) I want a decent home cinema system to accompany it. I've considered the Bose Lifestyle system, but it seems expensive and I've never seen it mentioned in any specialist magazines – do you think they're any good? If I was to consider the Denon DHT500SD, do you think I would notice a difference between that and a KEF KIT100, say?

SOLUTION We hope your screen's arrived by now – you'll certainly be enjoying it if it has. It's true to say that you're much more likely to see the Bose Lifestyle system advertised in the general press rather than magazines like this one; it's a competent set-up but one we can't help thinking is significantly overpriced.

It's safe to say that the Denon DHT500SD will offer a (slightly) more convincing surround effect than the KEF KIT100, but the out-and-out quality of the KEF's sound is superior. (Check out this month's *Reader Rescue* on p88). However, the KIT100 costs twice the price of the Denon. For that money, you could consider TEAC's handsome Legacy 700/LS-L800 system and enjoy high-quality, true surround sound – but with more speakers than the KEF, of course.

IF YOU WANT TO BUY... DVD PLAYERS

IS IT WORTH UPGRADING MY DVD PLAYER?
Yes, particularly if you're using an LCD or plasma TV that has either an HDMI or a DVI digital video input. These two sockets are the year's big news in video terms: each gives access to sharper, crisper images, and both can transfer 'scaled' 720p and 1080i pictures when needed.

WHAT ELSE CAN A MORE MODERN MACHINE OFFER?
Better performance for less money than you paid last time. HDMI and DVI outputs are now available in players costing £150 or less, while progressive scan is now almost standard, even in ultra-cheap kit. Multichannel music replay (DVD-A and SACD) is often fitted, too.

AND IF I JUST WANT TO WATCH FILMS ON MY OLD TV?
Prices in our *Buyer's Guide* start at £40 – the price of a couple of the latest DVD releases. Any inexpensive DVD player will connect to a TV new enough to have more than just an RF aerial input, and Toshiba's £50 SD-150E delivers pictures of astounding quality and detail.

SO HOW MUCH CAN I SPEND?
As we said, as little as £50 buys a great basic player, but it's important to budget for your player in the context of the rest of your kit. If you own a gorgeous 50in plasma, a fire-breathing receiver and a room full of blisteringly potent speakers, they deserve something like the £3350 Meridian G98 below.

Meridian's G98 is a fabulous piece of kit in the right system, with extraordinary sound and vision

KNOW HOW Setting up your receiver accurately:

A bit of fine-tuning makes the world of difference...

1. SET THE SPEAKER SIZES
Select large or small as reflects the speakers you've got, and adjust the crossover point to the level that corresponds to your speakers – check the manual. If you have access to six speakers in your set-up, ensure you enter in a value for your sixth, centre-rear speaker.

2. WEIGHT EACH SPEAKER
Use a test-tone meter (available for about £30) to accurately 'weight' each speaker. Sit in your listening position, and point the meter straight upwards, not at the speakers. Set the meter so the rotary dial reads 80dB. Select 'C' weighting and 'slow'

response. Turn on the test tone built into your receiver, and turn up the volume dial until you get a reading from the left-hand front speaker of 75dB. Trim the tone from each speaker to match that level.

3A. SET THE DELAY IN CENTIMETRES
With a tape measure, ascertain the distance from each speaker to your seat, and enter those figures into the 'delay' adjustment options on your receiver. This ensures the processor in your receiver accurately compensates for the size of your room.

3B. SET THE DELAY IN MILLISECONDS
Alternatively, measure from the front left speaker to your seat, then from the left rear speaker to your seat. You'll have two numbers. For every 30cm of difference between these two figures, add 1ms of delay. For example: 300cm to front speakers, 150cm to rear speakers = 150cm of difference = 5ms of delay.

Q&A Classic CD and amp combo from Cyrus; speaker-cable questions; exam success brings a happy windfall; what about a phono stage for my Linn turntable?

The half-size Cyrus combo

PROBLEM I am considering a system upgrade and have been looking at the Cyrus 8vs and Cyrus CD8x combination, partnered with the Spendor S5e speakers. I need to arrange a proper demo, but I'm convinced they'll fit the bill. Have you any other suggestions at this price point? Could you also suggest interconnects and speaker cable?

SOLUTION Well, we can't really argue with your selection, that's for sure. But there are always alternatives. Sticking with the Cyrus electronics, why not try some standmounts to see the difference? Both the £795 Spendor S3e and the £899 Ruark Sabre III are excellent speakers, which – should you be swayed – would save you a few quid and your room a fair few inches.

At the other end of the scale, the hefty £1625 PMC FB1+ speakers have an open, revealing sound, and though not without imperfection, are worth a listen. If you'd like to rip it up and start again, look into the Quad 909 power amp, CD-P2 CD player/preamp and 12L speaker combo.

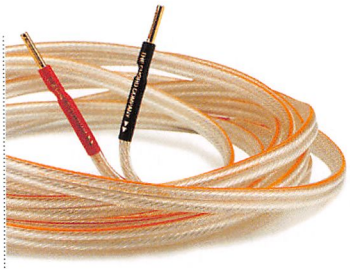
In terms of connections, the £90 Cyrus Interconnect is an obvious choice – crisp and transparent – and why not plump for the effective £25/m Cyrus Speaker Cable, too?

Speaker runs of different lengths

SYSTEM Denon DRA-F101 stereo receiver

PROBLEM I've just bought a Denon DRA-F101, and would like to have the speakers on the other side of the room to the main unit. Could you please recommend a cable that'll do the system justice, without being too expensive? The cable run will be around 7m to one speaker and 10m to the other. Also, will the difference in lengths of cable affect sound?

SOLUTION If we're talking in strictly audiophile terms, then yes, a 7m length of cable will produce a



sound that's slightly different from a 10m length of the same cable. The different lengths of cable have varying electrical properties such as impedance, which affects the signal differently in each case.

However, though we recommend short and equal lengths, in the real world, this isn't always possible. We don't think your cable discrepancy will cause problems in this case.

In terms of choosing speaker cable, our Award-winning Chord Company Carnival Silver Plus is not only a mouthful, but an excellent product, too. If its £5.50/m price is a little on the high side, the basic Chord Company Carnival at £3/m will do a good job with your Denon D-F101.

Spend my windfall for me...

SYSTEM Linn Kolektor preamp, LK100 power amplifier, Marantz CD-17 KI CD player, Tannoy Definition D300 loudspeakers

PROBLEM I recently sat my GCSE exams and my dad – bless his cotton socks – has promised me a hi-fi upgrade if I do well. I was thinking of the Linn Genki to fit in with the rest of my Linn kit, but I'm not sure whether it will actually improve the system? Should I just stick with the Marantz? What else should I consider?

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hifianswers@haynet.com
(sorry no personal replies)

PLAYLIST

The latest music to make your system shine

JOHN WILLIAMS
WAR OF THE WORLDS SOUNDTRACK If you like bass, you'll love this: Mr Movie-Soundtrack ignores his recent fare of overly familiar themes, and instead delivers a dark, brooding score with rich, all-enveloping lower-frequency power. If you want to test bass, and scare yourself silly, buy this CD.

MOST TESTING TRACK
The Attack on the Car Oh yes! Select Track Nine, crank up the volume and prepare for any present domestic animals to strap on their running spikes and speedily disappear to safe, under-chair, havens. Tests dynamics, don't ya know! Oh yes! Like you wouldn't believe.
★★★★★

HARD-FI
STARS OF CCTV
Production is compressed, but Hard-fi's debut outs hard-sounding systems. Crank up the volume and check if your set-up manages to maintains its composure.
★★★★☆

SAINT ETIENNE
TALES FROM TURNPIKE HOUSE
The band's seventh, and best-yet set presents harmonies, sweet vocals and layered electronica. An adorable test of system dexterity.
★★★★☆

ROYKSOPP
THE UNDER-STANDING
You can please everyone all of the time: the Swedes test system timing and treble ability, plus offer ideal driving or chilling music. Not forgetting a clutch of advert-friendly numbers.
★★★★☆

OM BEACHED
VARIOUS ARTISTS
From the vaults of OM Records comes this soulful dance mix – a classic summer collection of vocal and Latin house – a wonderful examination of midrange ability and timing.
★★★☆☆

SOLUTION A collective spitting-out of coffee greeted your letter – that's some system for a schoolie! Kids today, eh? We can't help but admire your confidence regarding your exam results, too. But hey, you think the money's as good as banked, so let's help you to spend it.

You might well have seen our CD player *Group Test* in our July 2005 issue, which saw the reappearance of said Genki. Long and short – we still love it. Matched with accurate, even-handed partners, it's an incredibly detailed, absorbing listen.

The CD-17 KI is a great piece of kit, too (you really are only 15?), but the Linn might well provide a bit more excitement and involvement: we think it may be more up a 15-year-old's street. As ever, try and have a listen to the Linn before you buy, and if looking for some comparisons, we suggest the usual suspects from Quad and Cyrus (see the first letter on the left).

Phono stage recommendation?

PROBLEM I have a Linn Axis turntable, and need an appropriate phono stage. What do you reckon I should buy?

SOLUTION The Linn Axis deck was discontinued in 1994, and cost around £500 back then. We think a suitable phono stage would be the Award-winning £299 Trichord Dino. It's capable of working with pricier kit than yours, but won't be wasted, either. An investment!

A PAIR OF STANDMOUNT SPEAKERS TO TAKE MY BREATH AWAY

Last year's Product of the Year, the Diamond 9.1 stereo speakers are great budget units

SYSTEM Cambridge Audio A1 amplifier; Cambridge Audio CD34 CD player; Eltax Liberty 3+ loudspeakers

PROBLEM I bought my hi-fi system a few years ago now and am looking for an upgrade. I'm thinking of the speakers first, but would eventually upgrade the lot. Unfortunately, I'm still on a budget, so I don't want to have to spend more than a couple of hundred quid on each of the components. I'm happy to say I used your advice back then and was happy with my system – so same again, please!

SOLUTION Our Award-winning budget hi-fi choices spring immediately to mind, not least as you're already a Cambridge Audio fan. The company is on a roll at the minute, so we strongly suggest taking a look at the Azur 640 range. The £250 640A integrated and the £250 640C CD player are excellent. Or if you fancy saving more money, try the slightly less sparkling but great value £200 540 amp and CD player. For speakers, we suggest the £180 Wharfedale Diamond 9.1s. They're stupendously good value, punching well above their weight.

IF YOU WANT TO BUY... TUNERS

ANALOGUE, DAB OR BOTH?
We still think that you would be best served having both analogue and DAB signals at your fingertips. We would recommend a combined DAB/FM tuner. Analogue signals will continue to be broadcast until at least 2008, and DAB coverage isn't yet 100 percent. Best to have both!

WHAT WILL I LOVE?
As long as you can receive DAB where you are, you'll benefit from both a wealth of new channels and an improvement in clarity on existing ones. The BBC has embraced digital radio wholeheartedly, with 12 national stations, and over 30 regional broadcasters, too. DAB definitely means extra choice.

WHAT WILL I HATE?
An outside aerial is always a good bet. If you're in an area of indifferent reception then an outdoor aerial should improve your chances of receiving more stations. In better reception areas it can only improve the quality of broadcasts. Be warned, though, poor DAB reception doesn't sound good.

I'M CONVINCED. WHAT'S HOT?
Top of the pile is the ground-breaking, all-in-one amp/CD/DAB combination, the £1000 Arcam Solo. If you'd prefer a dedicated tuner (and a much lower price) consider the Award-winning Sony ST-DB900 (below), or for something more portable, check out the Pure Digital Evoke-2^{XT}, tested on p10.

This Sony tuner is typical of the latest hot radios in that it offers analogue and DAB sound

KNOW HOW

Sensible upgrades for your hi-fi

It's not always about spending silly money, as these upgrades show...

We can't all afford top-price upgrades to our system, but there's more than one way to skin a cat. Here we share a few trade secrets and help you get the best out of your system, for less.

START WITH A BRICK...
Place a house brick on top of your CD player and on top of each speaker, as long as they're on stands or spikes. Vibration is the enemy of all things hi-fi, so the brick – while kind of unattractive – will add mass and therefore stability. Expect to receive greater punch from your CD deck, and tighter bass and improved midrange energy from your loudspeakers.

ADD A DASH OF ALCOHOL...
Give your interconnect plugs and speaker cable jacks a good clean with some cotton wool moistened in isopropyl alcohol (you'll find it in your local chemists). Leave everything to dry thoroughly before reconnecting. Your reward will be improved clarity and definition to your music.

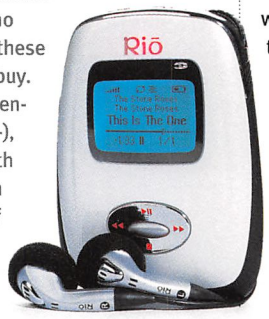
FINISH WITH THE SQUASH BALLS...
The world's cheapest isolation system. *Good Vibrations* sang the Beach Boys – but we in the world of hi-fi know there's not such thing. Placed under the feet of your CD player, amp or other component, half a squash ball will contribute to system clarity. Even better, a sheet of MDF on top of four half-squash balls makes a cheap isolation platform.

Q&A Why doesn't my Rio Carbon work with my PC? How do I transfer MiniDisc recordings to my PC? Typing details into iTunes is a drag...

Turning MiniDiscs into MP3s

PROBLEM How do I to transfer music from MiniDisc to my computer?

SOLUTION First, you need to connect your MiniDisc unit to your computer. Your MD player should give you a choice of an optical out or an analogue line out. Use the optical out if your soundcard has a corresponding optical in; otherwise, attach the line out to your soundcard's line in. Now you get your computer 'listening' using the right software. The best software offers lots of sound recording and editing features – packages such as Soundforge, Cakewalk, and Audition (formerly Cool Edit). You can download feature-limited demo versions of these before you buy. They're expensive (£100+), but are worth it if you plan to rip lots of MiniDiscs. There are also a few cheaper programs, such as N-Track Studio ($35, *www.n-track.com*) for the PC and WireTap (free) for the Mac, but don't expect the same results.



My MP3 player doesn't work

PROBLEM I bought a Rio Carbon some weeks ago. When I plugged it into my PC, it wasn't recognised. I spoke to Rio Technical Support and – as advised – reinstalled my Windows USB drivers. That didn't work do anything so, with help, I edited the Windows Registry to remove some references to other USB devices that might have been confusing my computer. That didn't work either – yet the Rio works on my office computer, so there's nothing wrong with it. Rio also advised me to contact my PC manufacturer to update the chipset software – which I did. And after all that? It still doesn't work! Do you have any more ideas?

SOLUTION That's quite a saga, and we think we have a solution, but you might not like it. First, you have to try to connect another mass storage device (as Windows likes to call MP3 players) to your computer. If it's a Rio-specific glitch, switch to one of the other leading players such as those from Apple or Creative. If none of them works with your PC, you need a new computer or at the least a new motherboard. It's outside the scope of these pages to advise on changing your motherboard, but it's cheaper than buying a complete new computer.

Typing tracks names into iTunes

PROBLEM How do I get iTunes to recognise track names for me?

SOLUTION First, make sure your computer is connected to the internet. Highlight the tracks, then go to 'Get CD Track Names' in the Advanced menu (see above). iTunes then checks an online database to see if it has your track names in it. If it doesn't, you'll have to type the names in yourself. To make this easier, highlight all the tracks, then press Ctrl+I (PC) or Cmd+I (Mac). The new window lets you fill in details – such as the artist – for lots of tracks at one time.

IF YOU WANT TO BUY... iPOD DOCKS

WHAT WILL I LOVE?
You'll love the superb convenience of a dock: just plug in your iPod, unplug and go. Charging and synching are easier than ever. And the newest generation of docks have loudspeakers built-in, too.

WHAT WILL I HATE?
Quality doesn't come cheap: the smaller docks don't have spectacular sound quality, while if you want a beefier sound, you could end up paying as much as for a decent micro system for the added chic.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I LOOK OUT FOR?
Make sure your player fits in your dock. Some have a port that fits many players or have a line-in socket – however, others are iPod, Mini or Shuffle-only. Also, not all docks synchronise.

CAN I TAKE IT WITH ME?
Most docks work off battery power, so you can take it down the park for picnics, or keep it in your suitcase for lonely business trips.

JBL's On Stage is an eye-catching design that also synchronises with your computer

RIP THESE

CREAM (HOXTON W REMIX)
SUNSHINE OF MY LOVE
Looking for a dance tune to get the booty shakin'? Available from *www.mp3toburn.com*, this cheeky remix is utterly irresistibly good.
★★★★★

UNFINISHED SYMPATHY
HIP KID
Another rework, this time of a Massive Attack classic. Hip Kid mutates it into a smooth breakbeat bonanza, ideal for hot'n'chilled-out summer nights.
★★★★★

PAUL McCARTNEY (LIVE AT LIVE 8)
A LONG AND WINDING ROAD
Sir Macca brought the successor to Live Aid to an emotional close, and this was the track that did it for most of us. Don't forget, proceeds go towards Live8.
★★★★★

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Reader Rescue

HELP! This month's Rescuee needs a stealthy surround system and slimline TV to finish off his designer pad in style

CURRENT SYSTEM
DVD player Yakumo 'supermarket special'
Mini system Sony DHC-MD333
Television Matsui CRT

OUR SOLUTION
Denon DHT-500SD £500
KEF KIT100 £1200
JVC LT-32DS £2000

LESS CAN BE MORE Dave's minimal look poses problems for hiding speaker cables, but the 'live', reflective walls work a treat with the KEF system's speakers

"WELL, MY HEARING is so bad I doubt I'll hear the difference anyway," Dave announces blithely as we arrive at his home in Stockport, Cheshire. Fortunately, his cheeky grin tells us he's probably pulling our legs. We think 'probably' because we've already heard about his chequered career to date, which has mostly involved banging his drum kit loudly in various studios, concert halls and nightclubs up and down the country – "with a bit of boring stuff thrown in".

Dave's looking to pep up his pad: "I bought this place last year, and since then my partner and I have put hours into it. We're really pleased now it's nearly finished, and are curious about what a home cinema system might do for it. I read your magazine pretty regularly, but I've never taken the plunge – partly because I'm a bit put off by some of the prices bandied around."

He's also put off by the thought of loads of cables and speaker boxes: "I could do without that cluttering up my lounge. I've been in enough studios to know I don't want to live in one."

Fortunately, we don't mind demanding punters – and we're not short of options to choose from, either. For this Rescue, we've gone with Denon's DHT-500SD home cinema package (£500), KEF's KIT100 virtual surround system (£1200), and a 32in LCD TV from JVC, the LT-32DS (£2000).

"We watch plenty of DVDs and I've got a few faves – movies like *Withnail and I* and comedies like Chris Morris's *The Day Today* – I watch over and over. I still pick up the odd secondhand VHS too – I bought Steve McQueen's *The Getaway* the other day. Seems everyone's chucking them out for some reason," he smiles.

We'll confess we cringed at the notion of inflicting VHS tapes on such a gorgeous LCD TV, but that's just how we are! There's a whistle of

"We watch loads of DVDs, and I've got a few faves I watch over and over"

approval as the JVC comes out of its box – only one person needs to lift it into place – and even when fed by Dave's budget DVD player, it gives a belting picture.

True, the 32in screen looks fairly dominant in Dave's 5m by 3m room, but with the viewers and TV in opposite corners it makes for comfortable viewing, though a 26-incher might be a fraction more suitable in here. "You can leave this behind, if you like," our Rescuee jokes – if only we got a pound for every time we heard that, Dave –

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BUDGET DVD IS WELL WORTH AN UPGRADE
Dave's budget DVD player is much-used, but we don't think it's up to the task of driving the fabulous JVC LCD

SLIMLINE KIT IS VITAL
With not much space to play with, the JVC LCD TV is a very welcome asset, although its 32in image is perhaps a little too big; KEF's tiny KIT100 system is stealth incarnate

"though I'm not sure about paying two grand for one." Fortunately, the prices of flatscreens are tumbling, so it's cause for reflection.

Next comes the Denon all-in-one cinema system. Its compact size is cause for celebration: "It's more kit than I would ideally have in here, but I think with a bit more time we could make it pretty inconspicuous," says Dave. And with its five speakers and sub positioned around the room, we fire it up. "Wow! That's impressive," exclaims Dave, as we indulge in the more testing scenes from WW2 epic *Downfall*. We know we're doing a good job as Dave beams in delight as the room in enveloped in a *Private Ryan*-style action frenzy. The pictures via the JVC's component inputs are stable and vibrant too – it certainly flattens VHS.

Neither is the Denon short on subtlety. Watching the final scenes in *Withnail and I*, Dave notes: "The voices of the two actors talking in the rain have amazing clarity. I've never heard the final soliloquy sound like that before."

But now we reach for our ace in the pack: the KEF KIT100. This Award-winning movie system offers DVD playback and virtual surround sound in a sleek three-box package. With no rear speakers, it should satisfy Dave's desire for a tidy, cable-free lounge: "Speakers bouncing sound around the room? That's a great idea – do they work?"

We set the system up using the test tone. After some fiddling with the angling of the speakers, we manage to effectively steer the sound around the room – including behind us – even though there are no rear speakers. More smiles show Dave's pleasure: "That's pretty damn good, isn't it? I was expecting virtual surround to mean it 'nearly works', but that sounds great. The Denon edges it for overall impact, but the actual quality of the sound from this system is fantastic."

The picture, via component outputs, is a match for the Denon's: the pallid flesh tones of the two leads in *Withnail and I* are brought out in all their glory, while Danny's wild, bloodshot eyes leap out at you from the screen.

"Well, you've certainly made a strong case today," admits Dave. "In the past, when I've had some savings to play with, I've tended to go off travelling for a few months, rather than spend them on 'things'. However, I could live with one of these systems: the Denon is great value, but if I could get hold of those KEF systems for around the same money, I'd be really tempted. And as for the TV, I'll be watching the prices of those closely over the next few months... very closely!"

Got a hi-fi or home cinema headache we can soothe? We'd love to help with any sound or vision-related conundrum. Send us details of your system and problem (see details far left): it could be you here next issue!

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February
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Epos ELS Subwoofer

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SCREENS SORTED

Is LCD, plasma or CRT television the way forward? Or is a projector your ideal display? We've got all the answers here. Just turn to page 1.2

HOME CINEMA

Get more from your DVDs and make the most of your TV with a fantastic surround sound system. We show you how easy it is on page 1.4

HI-FI SYSTEMS

Transform the way you listen to music with a proper hi-fi system – you won't believe just how great your music collection will soon sound. See page 1.5

MP3 MADE EASY

Everything you'll need to know about portable music players: which music and photo files they play; how many tracks they store. All the answers on page 1.8

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TVs & Projectors

KNOW HOW Flat TVs are all the rage nowadays, and not surprisingly: they offer great picture quality, bags of style and convenience. And just watch those prices drop...

HIGH RESOLUTION
Many cheaper flatscreen televisions are hampered by a low level of resolution. This can be fine with normal TV signals, but won't allow you to display High Definition TV in the future. If you're planning to buy, consider a set with higher resolution figures: see below for more details

DIGITAL TV BUILT-IN
Many modern sets offer the convenience of a Freeview tuner, which gives you access to many more channels of television than standard analogue broadcasting. You can also access some digital radio stations this way

FLOORSTANDING TV PLINTH
Sometimes you can buy matching TV supports to house several items of kit. They frequently look great, but bear in mind that you seldom get them as part of the purchase price. The same applies to wall brackets and even, in some cases, simple table-top stands

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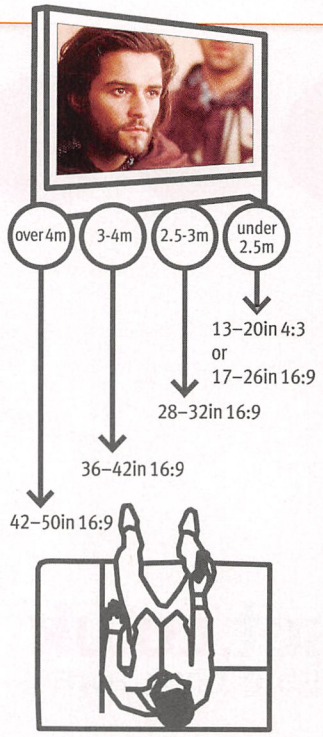
Buy the right screen size for your room

Your mum was right: if you sit too close to a screen that's too large, you'll strain your eyes in next to no time. Equally, a TV that's too far away won't convey the proper impact and cinema feel. Follow our chart on the right to find out the ideal size for your screen.

Go for built-in Freeview for loads more channels

You can easily add an external digibox to any new TV, but it makes sense to get one with a Freeview tuner included. It's not just neater and more convenient: it also delivers a better picture, because it simplifies the connection path between the tuner and the screen itself.



Get a High-Def ready set

High Definition TV launches in 2006, courtesy of Sky. You might not want to go for it immediately, but it makes sense to buy a TV that handles the new system, just in case. You can't change your mind later: all you'll be able to do is buy a new TV! We use the internationally recognised 'HD Ready' tag to identify every High Definition-ready TV we review: look for it in the mag, and when you're shopping.

What features do I need?

Bear in mind that some plasma TVs are only displays – they don't have sound or a tuner built-in, because they're sold for use in business environments or to home-cinema enthusiasts. Buy the television set that can cope with all your needs.

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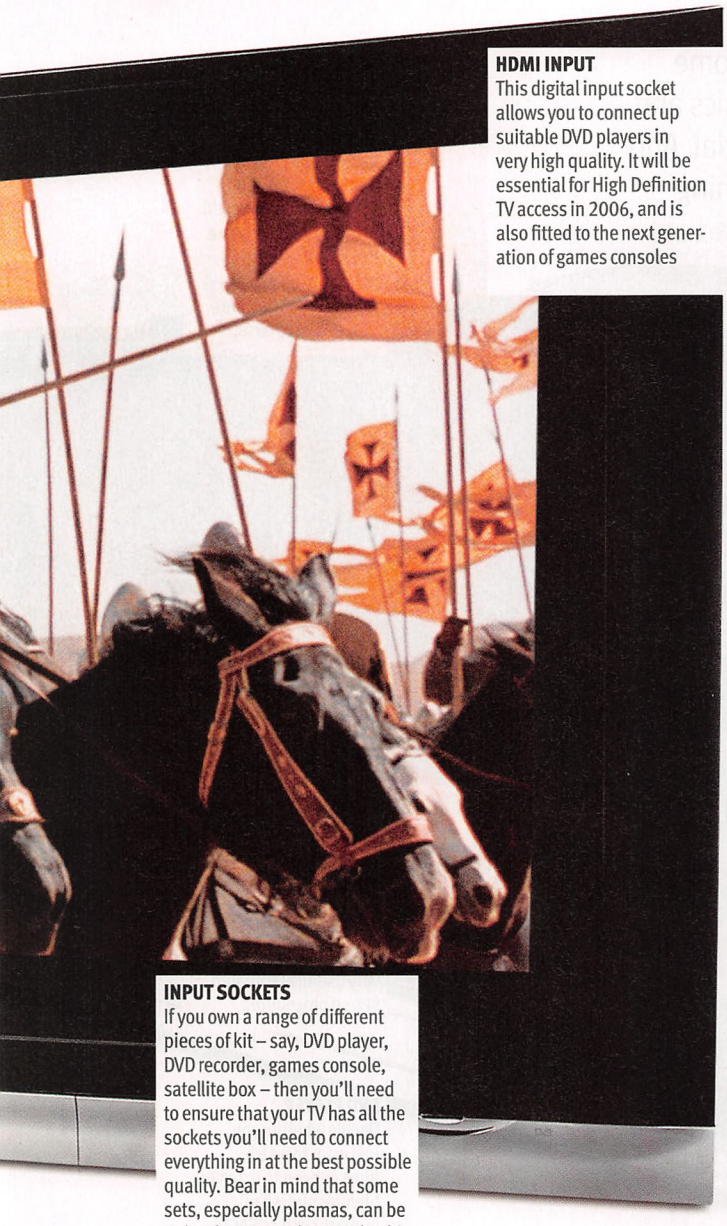


HDMI INPUT
This digital input socket allows you to connect up suitable DVD players in very high quality. It will be essential for High Definition TV access in 2006, and is also fitted to the next generation of games consoles

INPUT SOCKETS
If you own a range of different pieces of kit – say, DVD player, DVD recorder, games console, satellite box – then you'll need to ensure that your TV has all the sockets you'll need to connect everything in at the best possible quality. Bear in mind that some sets, especially plasmas, can be quite short on socketry – check!

BUY RIGHT TVs

Calculate your ideal TV size, position it correctly and boost its performance

Work out the right size of screen for your room...

- 13–20in 4:3 or 17–26in 16:9
- 28–32in 16:9
- 36–42in 16:9
- 42–50in 16:9

Alternatively, refer to our screen-size calculator on the left-hand page below

Have you got a Freeview box or satellite already?

If not, then check if your new TV has already digital built-in.

- Yes
- No

Do you want a set that'll work with High-Def TV?

These broadcasts begin later this year or early next.

- Yes
- No

How many devices do I need to plug into it?

Work out the number of devices that plug into your TV today – then decide if your new televsion set will have all the sockets you need to handle them with a few to spare:

- Digital video (HDMI or DVI)
- Component inputs
- Scarts
- Others

Does it come with a stand?

Or is it a flatscreen TV that's designed to be wall-mounted?

- Yes
- No
- Wall-mounted

MUST HAVES Flatscreens

Four super sets for you

PANASONIC TX26LXD500
£1600
- 26in screen suitable up to 2.5m
- Built-in digital TV
- HD-ready
- Plenty of sockets, including HDMI
- Stand included in price

SONY KDE-P37XS1
£3400
- 37in screen suitable up to 3.5m away
- Analogue tuner
- HD-ready
- Loads of sockets, including component
- It's a 2004 Award-winner

HITACHI 42PD5200
£3000
- 42in for viewing from up to 4m
- Analogue TV tuner
- HD-ready
- DVI-D socket for great pictures
- Super image from a Fujitsu panel

PIONEER PDP-504XDE
£4000
- 50in for viewing over 4m
- Built-in digital TV
- HD-ready
- Every socket you need

BUYER'S GUIDE £

And lastly, check it fared well in our tests! Find top TVs in our *Buyer's Guide*, starting on page 91

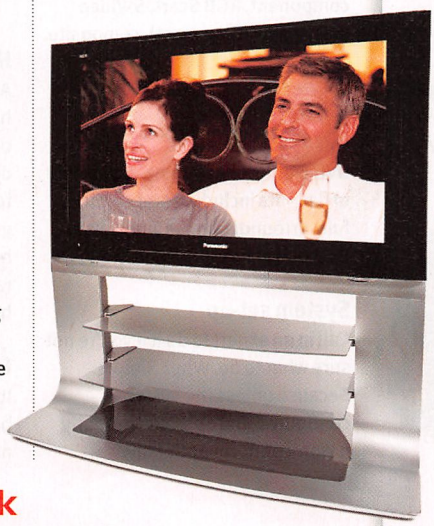
FAQs

What sockets do I need?

Look for several Scart sockets, at least one component video input and, if possible, a digital video input, either DVI-D or HDMI. This last feature isn't essential in smaller screen sets, but we don't buy a larger TV without one.

Does it come with a stand?

This is a potential pitfall for many buyers, whether they're shopping for flat or conventional TVs. Often, manufacturers quote prices for the set itself, without its stand (even if that's shown in the pictures). These can be quite expensive, particularly larger designs like the stand below (£500). Wall-brackets also cost you extra, and you need to mindful that some big plasmas can weigh quite a lot.



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System Builder

TVs & PROJECTORS | HI-FI | MP3

Home Cinema

KNOW HOW

Your choice of home cinema electronics and speakers is crucial. And fortunately choice is one thing you've got loads of... so read on!

SPEAKER PACKAGE
There's a straight choice here between performance and domestic acceptability. Go for a smaller subwoofer/satellite combo and it'll fit easily into the home. But it won't sound as good as a full-sized package. You pay the money and choose...

MULTICHANNEL AMPLIFIER
Even budget designs should include all the essentials. Any amplifier you buy should come with the full suite of movie soundtrack decoding and processing modes. Many mid-priced contenders even have a very useful automated set-up procedure.

DVD PLAYER
Decide whether you just want to watch films or need to listen to high-resolution music formats such as SACD and DVD-Audio as well

Movies or music

Decide where your priorities are. Is film performance paramount or do you listen to more music? Musical multichannel equipment is rare and tends to cost a lot more.

Connecting to a display

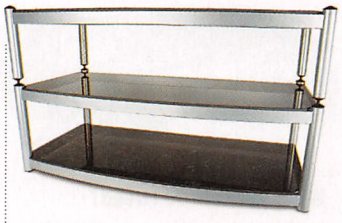
If your display can accept a digital video input such as HDMI or DVI then we suggest buying a player that can output such a signal. These can be bought for as little as £150. If your display device doesn't have such an input, the analogue connection hierarchy is as follows: component, RGB Scart, S-Video and finally (if you must), composite.

Higher resolution surround music formats

You've got a choice of SACD and DVD-Audio. These come in a variety of flavours including stereo and full surround. Choose a universal DVD player if you're interested.

System set-up

Call in an expert to do it if you're not sure what to do. Why? Simple: because unless the system is configured and adjusted properly it won't perform optimally.



Housing the electronics?

A home cinema amp generates heat, so ensure that there's plenty of airflow around it – whatever you do, don't plonk your DVD player on top of it. Magazines might photograph kit like this, but don't try it at home. Get a dedicated equipment rack, or buy a TV with a stand that has room for all your components.

Cables

It's a false economy to save money here. Buy decent cables, or you'll never get the best sound or vision.

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SUBWOOFERS
While all amplifiers give you the choice to omit the subwoofer, we wouldn't have a surround system without one. These add a degree of scale and authority that is almost impossible to achieve any other way.

BUY RIGHT Get in gear for movies

Don't be tempted by cinema kit until you know it's exactly right for you

What type of system?
- One-box
- Separates

Does your display have a digital video input?
- Yes
- No

Are you interested in high-resolution music formats?
- Yes
- No

What you do you want your DVD system to do?
- Playback only
- Play and record

Which recording formats do you want?
- Hard-disk drive (HDD)
- Recordable DVD (look for multi-format designs)
- HDD/DVD combined

Will the components fit in the intended rack?
- Yes
- No

Is there enough ventilation?
- Yes
- No

Speaker type
- Sub/sat package
- Full-size
- Silver or colour finish
- Wood finish

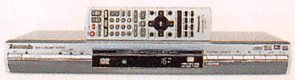
Where do the surrounds need to be put in the room?
- Wall
- Stand
- Floor

Does the package include a subwoofer?
- Yes
- No

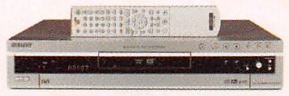
BUYER'S GUIDE £ Check it fared well in our tests! Find the pick of home cinema in our *Buyer's Guide*, p91

MUST HAVES Cinema

Some great selections



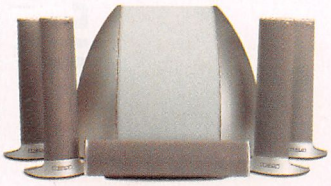
DVD PLAYER
PANASONIC DVD-S97
£150
- Includes HDMI socket for superior picture quality with suitable displays
- Component video
- Scart
- Plays DVD-A discs as well as DVD-Video, CD, MP3, DVD-R/RW, DVD-RAM



DVD RECORDER
SONY RDR-GXD500
£400
- Records onto multiple DVD formats
- Amazing-quality digital recordings
- Includes a Freeview digital tuner
- Incredible price deals available

HOME CINEMA IN A BOX
YAMAHA DVX-S200
£450
- Packed with features, including SACD playback
- DVD player, amp, speakers and subwoofer included
- Progressive scan picture quality
- 85 watts per channel sound

MULTICHANNEL RECEIVER
SONY STR-DB795
£300
- Fantastic-quality home cinema receiver
- Seven channels of 100w amplification
- All major Dolby and DTS modes
- Discounts available



SPEAKER PACKAGE
MISSION FS1-AV
£500
- Four satellites, with dedicated centre speaker and a 100w active subwoofer
- NXT certification

FAQs

General speaker positioning

The front three speakers need to go in line with the screen to lock the sound onto the picture. Ideally, the sub should go with these, though bass' less directional nature means it's not as critical as it is with other speakers. The surrounds usually go behind you, and should be angled to produce a cohesive and seamless sound field with the rest of the equipment.

Positioning the centre

Don't be tempted to put the centre speaker on top of the TV cabinet. This isn't the best place for it and can spoil the sound noticeably, because TV cabinets are usually made of thin plastic and resonate strongly. Try to put the centre on a dedicated support if possible.

Subwoofer set-up

Most people set the subwoofer too high. If you can identify the subwoofer's output as a separate entity from the rest of the speaker package, then the set-up isn't right. Use a piece of music with a steady bassline to adjust the sub's settings. Set it up so that the complete frequency range sounds as even and seamless as possible.

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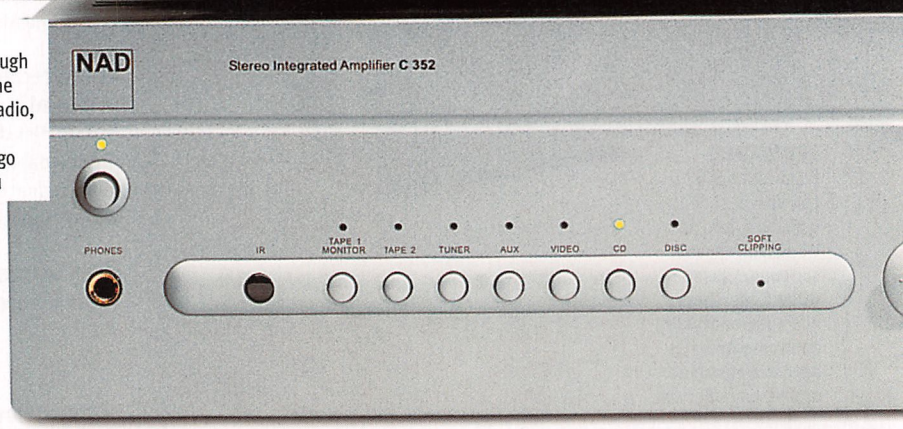
System Builder

HI-FI | HOME CINEMA | MP3 | TVs & PROJECTORS

KNOW HOW Make more of your music with a stereo system that will do your favourite tunes justice. Here's what to look for...

REMOTE CONTROL
It might seem strange in this day and age, but many stereo amplifiers still come without remote controls. I t means you'll keep fit getting up and down to adjust the volume, but is otherwise irritating. Check before you buy

AMPLIFIER
Ensure this has enough inputs to cover all the sources you have (radio, turntable etc), and adequate power to go loud enough for you



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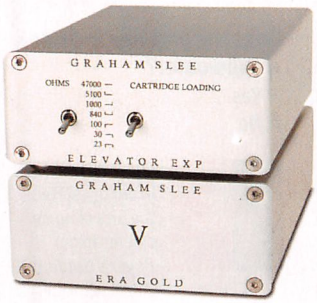
Can I use a record player?

If you have a record player the simplest way to hear it is with an amplifier with a built-in phono stage. This circuit amplifies and equalises the signal from the deck to a point where the main amp sections can make full use of it. Don't worry though, there are outboard units available if the amplifier you like doesn't include such a feature, starting at £40.



How can I tell how loud the system will sound?

Paper specs can only tell you so much. Oddly, amplifier power isn't the main indicator of how loud your system will go. Speaker sensitivity is more important, as each extra 3dB is equivalent to a doubling of amp power: so the combination of a 90dB speaker with a 50-watt amplifier will be as loud as an 87dB speaker with a 100-watt amp.

What if you want to use two pairs of speakers?

Some amps have two sets of speaker outputs. Don't use both pairs at once at high volume as the amp isn't designed to do this for long periods. Sound suffers in this configuration, too – but it's still a feature you can use occasionally.

Equipment racks

Bookshelves, cupboards or sideboards might be more convenient, but these don't yield the best results and could cause the products to over-heat due to inadequate ventilation. Spend at least £200 on a rack.

Speaker positioning

Before you buy a pair of speakers decide where you'd like to put

SPEAKERS
As a general guide: small speakers go in small rooms and big speakers perform best in larger spaces. While not a hard and fast rule you won't go far wrong using it

CD PLAYER
Most machines will now play home recorded CDs without a problem, but some still have issues when asked to replay MP3 files burnt onto a disc. If this is important to you check that the machine will replay MP3 discs before you buy

AMPLIFIER-FEATURES
Features such as tone controls, headphone outputs and speaker switching are relatively uncommon with quality separates, so decide whether these are important to you and pick the product accordingly

FAQs

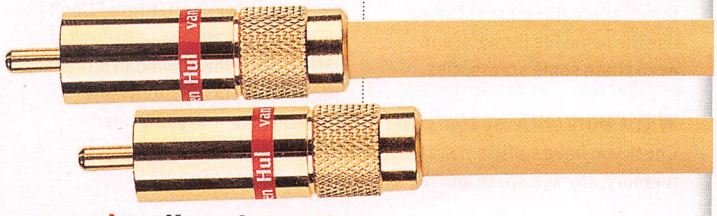
them. Many speakers are designed to work best well away from all walls, which usually means at least a metre or so away from any room boundaries. Get it wrong and the bass will be overblown and boomy.

Speaker stands

The tweeter – the smallest drive unit you'll see on any speaker – should be at ear height when you listen. This give the best-balanced sound. Smaller speakers need to sit on stands to raise them to the correct height and support them solidly. Don't skimp here because the speakers will never reveal their true potential if you compromise. Spend around 25 percent of your speaker's price on stands.

Getting connected

Don't use the basic cables that come with equipment. These are usually of extremely poor quality and will limited overall performance. Good aftermarket leads will make all the difference. Don't be tempted to skimp. Set aside 15 percent of your budget for cables.



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BUY RIGHT Hi-fi checklist

All the essential questions to ask before picking kit

Can the CD player read MP3-format discs?
- Yes
- No

Does the amplifier have enough inputs?
- Yes
- No

Does it have a phono stage?
- Yes
- No

Does it have the right features?
- Tone controls
- Headphone sockets
- Remote control
- Switching speaker outputs

Speaker choice
- Large
- Small

Will they need stands?
- Yes
- No

Speaker position
- Free space
- Wall

Can you receive DAB (digital radio) signals?
- Yes – if in doubt, check *www.bbc.co.uk/digitalradio/listen/postcode.shtml*
- With the aid of a rooftop aerial
- No (FM still sounds great!)

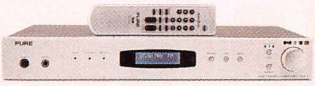
What does the turntable's price include?
- Deck only
- Tonearm
- Cartridge

BUYER'S GUIDE £ Lastly, check it fared well in our tests. See the hi-fi section of our *Buyer's Guide*, from p91

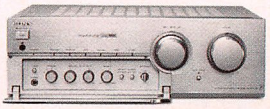
MUST HAVES System separates

Hi-fi heroes

CD PLAYER
NAD C521BEE
£200
- Open and involving sound quality
- Best Buy Award when it came out
- Remote control
- Big discounts available
- Choice of two finishes



DAB/FM TUNER
PURE DRX-702ES
£330
- Access all the latest digital radio channels
- Superb FM reception
- Excellent sound quality
- Easy to use
- Fantastic discounts on offer



AMPLIFIER
SONY TA-FB940R
£350
- Superb, crisp, clean sounding amp
- A Best Buy Award-winning product
- 60w per channel
- Tone controls
- Headphone socket
- Great deals

CASSETTE DECK
YAMAHA KX-580SE
£250
- Best Buy Award-winner in 2002
- Makes quality analogue copies
- Twin-head for better playback
- Dolby Noise Reduction B, C, S

SPEAKERS
MISSION M31i
£140
- Work best 20-50cm from rear wall
- Sound great head-on, so no need to add toe-in
- Biwire to hear them at their best
- Sensitivity of 88dB

System Builder

HOME CINEMA HI-FI TVs & PROJECTORS MP3

KNOW HOW

What to look for when you are buying a portable MP3 player, including size, battery life and ease-of-use

BATTERY LIFE
Battery life is another important consideration, especially as most players use batteries that can only be recharged when connected to a docking station and/or computer. Look for at least 10 hours use between charges – more if you're a fan of long-haul flights!

HOW MANY SONGS?
On average, 1GB of storage will hold up to 250 songs. Typical player options range from a 512MB ultraportable (120 songs) to a 4-6GB mini player (1000-1500 tunes) and larger 20GB (or bigger) 5000-tracks jukebox designs.

HDD vs SOLID-STATE
Larger jukebox players like this Apple iPod use hard-disk drives (HDD) to store songs, while the smaller stick-style players use solid-state storage. The former can store more, the latter has no moving parts, so your music will be skip-free.

EASE OF USE
Usability is also important – try before you buy, making sure the combination of track-navigation and volume controls suits you.

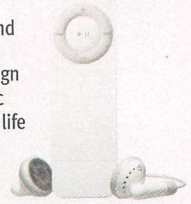
HEADPHONES
iPod headphones (as with those bundled with the majority of players) are the weak link. You'll hear more of what the player can do if you invest in a better pair.

MUST HAVES

Portables

Take MP3 anywhere

APPLE iPOD SHUFFLE
FROM £69
- 512MB (£69) and 1GB (£99) models
- Solid-state design for skip-free music
- 12 hour battery life
- AAC and MP3
- No display



SONY NW-HD5B
FROM £200
- 20GB only
- 40-hour battery
- Spare batteries only £30
- AAC, MP3, WMA files
- Black, red or silver casing
- Ultra-small

CREATIVE ZEN TOUCH £170
- A lot of storage (20GB) for the money
- 24-hour battery life
- Large display
- MP3 and WMA
- PC-only design

APPLE iPOD
FROM £209
- 20GB (£209) and 60GB (£299) units
- Colour screen and photo-file support
- AAC, MP3 and Apple Lossless
- 5-15 hr battery
- Sleek design

FAQs

What player's right for you?
Decide your budget and how much music you want to carry with you. The more features and storage you want adds bulk and cost. It's worth stretching your budget to buy the best capacity (and spec) you can afford, as your MP3 collection will build faster than you think.

Do I need to download?
Websites like Napster and iTunes sell a superb selection of tracks, but it's quick and easy to 'rip' MP3 files from your own CD collection – the players come with all the software you need, or download iTunes.

What about extra features?
If you're a big radio fan, look out for players with built-in FM tuners. A colour screen (coupled with a large storage capacity) is handy for storing and displaying digital photos. Some players are fully multimedia capable, supporting MP4 video files, too. Other options include making voice recordings.

Is one player enough?
You might find you buy several players for different uses – for example an iPod Shuffle for your daily commute and a larger-capacity player for long holidays. It makes sense to go with players from the same manufacturer – they'll share the same software, use the same file formats, and even share some accessories.

Will it work with my computer?
Check you have sufficient system memory, storage space and the right operating system (some players are PC-only). Your computer needs USB sockets (preferably 2.0) to connect to the MP3 player.

Broadband Internet access is incredibly useful, too – not only does it allow you to download tracks from online music stores, but it allows your software to sync up with Gracenote's CDDB (CD Database) – automatically filling in the track details for every CD.

What rate should I rip at?
The more compressed a music track, the lower its 'bit-rate.' Don't rip at below 128kbps – the typical rate used by the download stores. Higher bit-rate files hold more musical data – so you'll hear more detail – but take up much more storage capacity.

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WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION

The world's No.1 home entertainment magazine

The No.1 source of clear, expert and independent advice
Over 1,000,000 readers worldwide every month agree!

Buyer's Guide

OVER 1400 REVIEWED & RATED PRODUCTS

Welcome to the UK's most **in-depth guide** to home cinema and hi-fi. Every product, every price

WITH MORE THAN 1400 test verdicts, including all the tech-specs you need to know, our *Buyer's Guide* is your passport to a new world of top-class hi-fi and home cinema kit that'll transform your music and movies.

Our 29 years of testing experience – combined with unique reviewing facilities and access to the latest products first – arms you with clear, independent advice.

Our editorial staff are experts in every area of home entertainment, trained in the latest technologies and briefed on all the hot new products. Where rival magazines rely on isolated writers reviewing in a range of locations, WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION works as a team to thoroughly test kit in our dedicated review facilities. These aren't forbidding laboratories, but custom-built rooms of different sizes combining high-tech test systems with real-world fixtures and fittings like sofas and bookcases. This allows us to tell just how the review products would look and sound in your homes.

Our reviewing rooms may have soft furnishings, but we're hard on the kit we test. It's not enough for a product to perform well, it also has to offer great value for money. We conduct ruthless head-to-head tests to uncover the class-leaders in every category at every price point – as well as some great specialist options.

What can we help you buy today?

We've invested almost a million pounds in our state-of-the-art testing facilities, where our world-renowned reviewers put more kit through its paces than any other magazine. We can – and do – handle anything from the smallest MP3 player to the largest home cinema system

HOME CINEMA

DVD PLAYERS • DVD RECORDERS 94
DVD RECORDERS • SURROUND AMPS & RECEIVERS 95
PROCESSORS • SUBWOOFERS 96
SUBWOOFERS • COMPACT SPEAKER PACKAGES 99
COMPACT & FULL SIZE SPEAKER PACKAGES 100
FULL-SIZE SPEAKER PACKAGES • PC/MP3 SPEAKERS • HOME CINEMA IN A BOX WITH DVD 101
HOME CINEMA IN A BOX • WIDESCREEN TVs • PLASMA & REAR-PROJECTION TVS 103

TVs & PROJECTORS

PLASMA & REAR PROJECTION TVs • LCD TVs 105
LCD TVs • PROJECTORS 107
PROJECTORS • DIGITAL TV TUNERS 109
VIDEO CABLES 110
DIGITAL INTERCONNECTS • CD PLAYERS 121

HI-FI

CD PLAYERS 121
RECORDERS • MUSIC SERVERS • MUSIC SERVER CLIENTS • TURNTABLES 129
TURNTABLES • TUNERS & PORTABLE RADIOS 132
TUNERS & PORTABLE RADIOS 133
INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS/RECEIVERS 137
INTEGRATED AMPS/RECEIVERS • PREAMPS 140
POWER AMPS • PHONO & HEADPHONE AMPS 141
PHONO & HEADPHONE AMPS • SPEAKERS 145
SPEAKERS 146
SPEAKERS 147
SPEAKERS • MICRO & STYLE SYSTEMS 150
MICRO & STYLE SYSTEMS • SPEAKER CABLES 151
SPEAKER CABLES 155
SPEAKER CABLES • ANALOGUE INTERCONNECTS 159
ANALOGUE INTERCONNECTS • MAINS CABLES, BLOCKS & CONDITIONERS • SPEAKER STANDS 165
SPEAKER STANDS • EQUIPMENT RACKS • HEADPHONES 169
HEADPHONES • REMOTE CONTROLS 170

MP3

MP3 PLAYERS • CD & MD PERSONALS 170

hearing is believing AV

YAMAHA

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Buy smarter, buy better

What follows is the UK's most comprehensive guide to home cinema and hi-fi, and it has just got bigger and better. Follow our step-by-step guide to help you buy the best for your cash.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

HOW WE CAN HELP

1 Section
All products of the same type are in the same place – for example, all the DVD players are in the first section. All sections list products alphabetically, with the larger sections being sub-divided by price. For example: DVD players 'under £400' are listed first, and those '£401 and over' follow aftewards.

2 Product name
This column gives you the exact name and model of products. Use it to search in the shops or online.

3 Price
This is a suggested retail price. *It's not necessarily the price you must pay*. See our shopping advice below for how to get the greatest deals.

4 Date tested
This is the date of the issue in which the product was last tested (AW indicates the annual Awards issue). FT means the product featured in our *First Tests* section. GT or ST mean it faced a selection of similar products in a comprehensive *Group Test* or an extra-large *Supertest* or *Megatest*. To get hold of the relevant back issues, call 08456 777813.

5 Verdict
We give every product a star rating, out of five. Five stars mean the product is excellent, a real class-leader; a four-star verdict means the product is very good, and is highly recommended; three stars means it's only an average product, but worth considering; two stars mean you could do better elsewhere; one-star products are best avoided.

6 We said...
A short verdict on each products, with longer summaries for Award-winners and best in class products.

7 Data
Our updated *Buyer's Guide* includes more essential data than ever in an easier to use format. We've included a *Glossary* on p186 to explain certain technical terms. And finally, there's a comprehensive *Directory* on p188, with every manufacturer's phone number you'll need.

Clare Newsome
Editor

HOME CINEMA
94
DVD recorders | DVD players

DVD players
Digital video and audio on handy CD-sized discs

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	DVD-A	SACD	MP3	DVD+R/+RW	DVD-R/-RW	DVD-RAM	Composite out	Component out
BUDGET Up to £400												
Cambridge Audio Azur 540D	200	08.05/GT	★★★★★	Sonically impressive but you can get a much better picture.								
Denon DVD-1910	230	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Excellent digital video pictures but average with analogue.								
Dual DVD-859	43	06.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Fair buy but better performance costs not much more.								
Goodmans GDVD67W3LCD (port)	130	09.05/GT	★★★★☆	Bargain - definitely audition if you are on a tight budget.								
Harman-Kardon DV22	300	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Great looks but it can't match the best.								
Harman-Kardon DVD31	400	03.05/ST	★★☆☆☆	Well-made and accomplished but the price is just too high.								
Lafayette LFDV969	120	08.04/GT	★★★★☆	Well built, good features and fine performance.								
Limit DVD800SE	150	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Tuning by Cyrus has made this special with music.								
Mustek PL-408 (portable)	226	09.05/GT	★☆☆☆☆	We can't think of a single reason to buy this player.								
NAD T513	170	Awd.04	★★★☆☆	Not a bad performer but there's better value around.								
NAD T533	250	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	You'll struggle to find improvements over budget models.								
NAD T562	400	12.02/FT	★★★☆☆	Decent player, but it doesn't offer anything special.								
NAD T571 (DVD/CD changer)	350	11.02/FT	★★★★☆	A neat CD multiplayer and DVD player from NAD.								
Pacific DVD 1002 Mk2	40	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	Very capable for the money - ideal for a second-room.								
Philips DVP-720SA	150	08.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Nice, but the performance can't justify the price.								
Pioneer DV-585A	130	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Worth considering if you need a universal disc player.								
Sony DVL-LS785	140	08.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Chic looks but in action it lacks a certain sparkle.								
Sony DVP-NS585P	100	11.04/FT	★★★★☆	Combine with the DVP-NS585P for a great system.								
Sony DVP-NS955	230	03.05/ST	★★★★☆	Stable and composed but the colours are painfully intense.								
Sony MV-700HR (portable)	340	09.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Decent but it's not great value for money.								
Toshiba SD-150E	50	08.05/FT	★★★★★	One heck of a bargain - picture and sound is awesome.								

Toshiba SD-150E
An immensely capable budget player – could be the most cost-effecti you'll ever spend. Image quality is breathtaking, you're looking at a performance that can match players costing twice, if not four times a High-quality DVD players don't come any cheaper... yet!

Toshiba SD-P1600 (portable)	200	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Outperforms all its rivals - it's an absolute bargain.
Yamaha DVD-S1500	400	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Solid performer but there are better universal players.
Yamaha DVD-S557	130	08.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Competent enough but you can get better for similar money.
BUDGET £401 and over				
Arcam DiVA DV78	700	05.04/GT	★★★★★	You can have the best of both worlds in one box.
Arcam DiVA DV79	1000	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Best DVD player £750-£1000 in Awards 2004.
Arcam FMJ DV29	1600	12.04/FT	★★★★★	Awe-inspiring visuals and impressive music delivery.
Cyrus DVD6	750	06.04/FT	★★☆☆☆	Good-looking but won't disturb the best in class.
Cyrus DVD8	1200	02.03/GT	★★★★★	Excellent for music - not outstanding with movies.
Denon DVD-2910	600	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Best DVD player £250-£750 in Awards 2004.
Denon DVD-3910	900	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Outstanding, especially paired with the AVR-3805.
Denon DVD-A1XV	2500	04.05/FT	★★★★★	Real feast of cutting-edge technology - astonishing picture.
Lexicon RT-10	2750	01.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Great picture, but ordinary sound at an extraordinary price
Meridian G91DAB	3895	05.05/FT	★★★★★	Not just a DVD player but a processor and tuner as well.
Meridian G98	3350	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Best DVD player over £1000 in Awards 2004. Sensational.
Meridian Reference 800	10805	02.01/FT	★★★★★	Staggering player - astonishingly accomplished.
Myryad Z122	500	05.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	Reasonable performer but it doesn't justifying its price.
Onkyo DV-SP1000E	2800	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Stunning player - you need to see it to believe.
Pioneer DV-668AV-S	600	05.04/GT	★★★★☆	Credible performer but stereo is merely adequate.
Pioneer DV-757Ai	800	01.04/GT	★★★★★	This is still one of the best universal players around.
Pioneer DV-868AVi	1000	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Great picture, thanks to cutting-edge HDMI technology.
Primare DVD30	2000	08.04/FT	★★★★☆	Very good, but for this money it needs to be exceptional.
Roksan Caspian	1195	09.02/ST	★★★☆☆	CD player that spins DVDs, but there's better around.
TEAC DV-50	4500	10.04/GT	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. No longer the class-leader.

SHOP SMARTER

Five golden rules to follow before you flex your credit card...

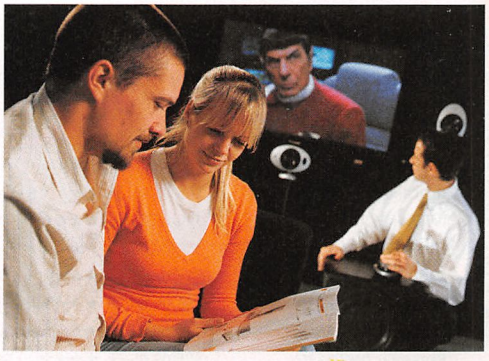
1 Get smart
Use our tests and *Buyer's Guide* to learn about the products. It pays to be spec-savvy.

2 Insist on a demonstration
Arrange to audition any kit in a listening room or during a home trial – not on the shop floor.

3 Take along your favourite discs
Improving your system is all about getting more from the music and movies you love, and spinning well-known CDs and DVDs will help you see and hear how systems measure up.

4 Cheap doesn't mean good value
Search around and compare prices from a range of suppliers, but always consider service and support as part of the package.

5 Take your time
Be sure you're happy with your choices. If in doubt, always ask – never rush your decision.



DVD players

Digital video and audio on handy CD-sized discs

BUDGET Up to £400

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	DVD-A	SACD	MP3	DVD+R/+RW	DVD-R/-RW	DVD-RAM	Composite out	Component out	S-Video out	RGB Scart out	DVI-D out	HDMI out	Phono out	Digital opt out	Digital coax out	FireWire out	six-channel out	Dolby decoding	DTS decoding	PAL prog scan	NTSC prog scan
					PLAYS						INPUTS & OUTPUTS														
Cambridge Audio Azur 540D	200	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Sonically impressive but you can get a much better picture.	●		●		●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Denon DVD-1910	230	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Excellent digital video pictures but average with analogue.			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●					●	●
Dual DVD-859	43	06.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Fair buy but better performance costs not much more.				●			●		●	●								●			
Goodmans GDVD67W3LCD (port)	130	09.05/GT	★★★★☆	Bargain - definitely audition if you are on a tight budget.							●							●							
Harman-Kardon DV22	300	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Great looks but it can't match the best.				●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●					●	●
Harman-Kardon DVD31	400	03.05/ST	★★☆☆☆	Well-made and accomplished but the price is just too high.	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Lafayette LFDV969	120	08.04/GT	★★★★☆	Well built, good features and fine performance.	●			●		●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●		●	●
Limit DVD800SE	150	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Tuning by Cyrus has made this special with music.				●		●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●			
Mustek PL-408 (portable)	226	09.05/GT	★☆☆☆☆	We can't think of a single reason to buy this player.				●	●	●	●	●	●				●		●						●
NAD T513	170	Awd.04	★★★☆☆	Not a bad performer but there's better value around.				●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●					●	●
NAD T533	250	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	You'll struggle to find improvements over budget models.	●			●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●			●	●
NAD T562	400	12.02/FT	★★★☆☆	Decent player, but it doesn't offer anything special.				●			●	●	●	●			●	●	●					●	●
NAD T571 (DVD/CD changer)	350	11.02/FT	★★★★☆	A neat CD multiplayer and DVD player from NAD.				●			●	●	●	●			●	●	●						●
Pacific DVD 1002 Mk2	40	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	Very capable for the money - ideal for a second-room.				●			●		●	●			●		●						
Philips DVP-720SA	150	08.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Nice, but the performance can't justify the price.				●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Pioneer DV-585A	130	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Worth considering if you need a universal disc player.	●	●		●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Sony DVL-LS785	140	08.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Chic looks but in action it lacks a certain sparkle.		●		●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Sony DVP-NS585P	100	11.04/FT	★★★★☆	Combine with the DVP-NS585P for a great system.				●	●	●	●	●	●	●				●						●	●
Sony DVP-NS955	230	03.05/ST	★★★★☆	Stable and composed but the colours are painfully intense.		●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Sony MV-700HR (portable)	340	09.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Decent but it's not great value for money.				●			●							●							
Toshiba SD-150E	50	08.05/FT	★★★★★	One heck of a bargain - picture and sound is awesome.				●		-R	●	●		●			●		●					●	●

Toshiba SD-150E

An immensely capable budget player – could be the most cost-effective fifty quid you'll ever spend. Image quality is breathtaking, you're looking at a level of performance that can match players costing twice, if not four times as much. High-quality DVD players don't come any cheaper... yet!

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION BEST IN CLASS

Toshiba SD-P1600 (portable)	200	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Outperforms all its rivals - it's an absolute bargain.			●										●								
Yamaha DVD-S1500	400	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Solid performer but there are better universal players.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●			●	●
Yamaha DVD-S557	130	08.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Competent enough but you can get better for similar money.			●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●			●	●	●	●

BUDGET £401 and over

Arcam DiVA DV78	700	05.04/GT	★★★★★	You can have the best of both worlds in one box.				●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●			●	●	●	●
Arcam DiVA DV79	1000	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Best DVD player £750-£1000 in Awards 2004.	●		●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Arcam FMJ DV29	1600	12.04/FT	★★★★★	Awe-inspiring visuals and impressive music delivery.	●		●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Cyrus DVD6	750	06.04/FT	★★☆☆☆	Good-looking but won't disturb the best in class.				●	●		●		●	●			●	●	●						
Cyrus DVD8	1200	02.03/GT	★★★★☆	Excellent for music - not outstanding with movies.				●	●		●	●	●	●			●								
Denon DVD-2910	600	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Best DVD player £250-£750 in Awards 2004.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Denon DVD-3910	900	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Outstanding, especially paired with the AVR-3805.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Denon DVD-A1XV	2500	04.05/FT	★★★★★	Real feast of cutting-edge technology - astonishing picture.	●	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Lexicon RT-10	2750	01.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Great picture, but ordinary sound at an extraordinary price	●	●	●		●		●	●	●				●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Meridian G91DAB	3895	05.05/FT	★★★★★	Not just a DVD player but a processor and tuner as well.	●		●		●		●	●	●		●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●
Meridian G98	3350	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Best DVD player over £1000 in Awards 2004. Sensational.	●		●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●			●		●	●	●	●	●
Meridian Reference 800	10805	02.01/FT	★★★★★	Staggering player - astonishingly accomplished.	●		●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●
Myryad Z122	500	05.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	Reasonable performer but it doesn't justifying its price.				●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●			●	●	●	●
Onkyo DV-SP1000E	2800	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Stunning player - you need to see it to believe.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Pioneer DV-668AV-S	600	05.04/GT	★★★★☆	Credible performer but stereo is merely adequate.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Pioneer DV-757Ai	800	01.04/GT	★★★★★	This is still one of the best universal players around.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Pioneer DV-868AVi	1000	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Great picture, thanks to cutting-edge HDMI technology.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Primare DVD30	2000	08.04/FT	★★★★☆	Very good, but for this money it needs to be exceptional.	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Roksan Caspian	1195	09.02/ST	★★★☆☆	CD player that spins DVDs, but there's better around.			●				●	●	●	●			●	●	●						
TEAC DV-50	4500	10.04/GT	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. No longer the class-leader.	●	●					●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●

DVD recorders

Record TV pictures digitally in superb quality

BUDGET Up to £400

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	DVD-A	SACD	MP3	DVD+R/RW	DVD-R/RW	DVD-RAM	DVD+R/RW	DVD-R/RW	DVD-RAM	Hard disk	S-Video in	RGB Scart in	FireWire in	Component out	S-Video out	RGB Scart out	DVI-D out	HDMI out	Digital opt out	Digital coax out	FireWire out
					PLAYS						RECORDS				INPUTS & OUTPUTS										
Goodmans GDVD300R	200	01.05/ST	★★☆☆☆	Poor TV tuner performance and below-par recordings.			●	●	●		●				●	●		●	●	●			●	●	●
Hitachi DV-RX7000E	240	01.05/ST	★★☆☆☆	Overpriced considering what you can get for this money.				●	●	●		●	●		●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●
JVC DR-MH20	350	09.05/GT	★★★★☆	Fine performer in most regards but there are better.					●	●		●	●		●	●		●	●	●			●	●	●
Liteon LVW-5045	350	06.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Reasonable buy on paper, but the results are mediocre.			●	●	●		●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●
Mustek R100B	117	06.04/GT	★★★☆☆	This provides fine value on a quality-per-quid basis.			●	●	●		●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●
Panasonic DMR-EH50	400	09.05/GT	★★★★☆	Fine value - a solid contender that demands an audition.			●		●	●		●	●	●	●	●			●	●				●	●
Panasonic DMR-ES10EB	235	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	Great budget choice that's a breeze to use.			●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●			●	●			●	●	●
Panasonic DMR-ES30V	350	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Worth a look if you want a DVD and VCR recorder in one box.			●		●	●		●	●		●	●			●	●			●	●	●

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

GLOSSARY
page 186

DVD recorders continued...

Record TV pictures digitally in superb quality

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	PLAYS					RECORDS				INPUTS & OUTPUTS									
					DVD-A	SACD	MP3	DVD+R/RW	DVD-R/RW	DVD-RAM	DVD+R/RW	DVD-R/RW	DVD-RAM	Hard disk	S-Video in	RGB Scart in	FireWire in	Component out	S-Video out	RGB Scart out	DVI-D out	HDMI out	Digital opt out	Digital coax out	FireWire out
BUDGET Up to £400																								
Sharp DV-HR400	400	09.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Not bad, but it's ordinary fare compared to the best.			●	●	●			●			●	●		●	●	●			●	●	●
Sony RDR-HX510	400	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Excellent recording quality and impressive playback.			●	●	●		●	●		●	●			●	●	●			●	●	●

Sony RDR-HX510

Sony has discontinued our previous fave, the'GXD500, in favour of this model. It eschews the built-in Freeview tuner in favour of an 80GB hard disk, and an added bonus is that it's compatible with dual-layer DVDs - so you can squeeze twice the amount of video on a single disc. It's also really easy to use and a great performer.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION BEST IN CLASS

Toshiba RD-XS34	399	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Excellent recording capability and playback - feature laden.					●			●	●		●	●		●	●	●			●	●	●
BUDGET £401 and over																								
Panasonic DMR-E500	1300	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Talented performer that produces top-class recordings.	●		●		●	●			●	●	●	●		●	●	●			●	●	●
Pioneer DVR-920H	1300	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	Feature-packed machine that is an impressive performer.			●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●	●
Sharp DV-HR300H	500	06.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Convenient but it's let down by recording quality.			●	●	●		●			●	●	●		●	●	●			●	●	●

Surround amps & receivers

Home cinema and hi-fi sound through multiple speakers

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Tuner presets	Channels/power	SURROUND MODES								INPUTS & OUTPUTS								
							Pro-Logic II	Pro-Logic IIx	Dolby Digital EX	DTS Neo:6	DTS Matrix	DTS Discrete	DTS 96/24	THX	THX EX	THX Ultra2	External inputs	Pre-outs	Analogue in	Coax digital in	Opt digital in	FireWire in	PC in	Digital opt out	Digital coax out
BUDGET Up to £800																									
Cambridge Audio Azur 540R 6.1	250	10.04/GT	★★★★☆	Great for gung-ho movie-watching.	40	6x80	●		●								5	7	●	●	●			●	●
Denon AVR-1705	250	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Astonishing - top choice at £250.	40	6x75	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				7	7	●	●	●			●	
Denon AVR-2805	700	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Best receiver £500-£750 Awards 2004.	56	7x100	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				8	8	●	●	●			●	
Eltax AVR800	200	04.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Killer specifications for the price.	20	6x92	●		●	●	●						7	1	●	●	●			●	●
Harman-Kardon AVR 130	350	06.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Game performer with real strengths.	30	5x40	●										8	6	●	●	●			●	●
Harman-Kardon AVR 430	800	12.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Decent but isn't not special enough.	30	7x65	●		●	●	●	●	●				3	8	●	●	●			●	
Marantz SR4500	350	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	Solid performer with plenty of features .	50	7x80	●	●	●		●	●	●				7	8	●	●	●			●	●
Onkyo TX-SR702E	700	03.05/FT	★★★★☆	Just the ticket for those who like it loud.	40	7x130	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		7	7	●	●	●			●	●
Pioneer VSX-2014i	800	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Well-equipped, impressive verve.	30	7x100	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			4	8	●	●	●	●		●	
Pioneer VSX-C502	300	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Svelte looks and spacious sound.	30	7x75	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				4	6	●	●	●				
Pioneer VSX-D814	300	03.05/ST	★★★★☆	Over-confident, under-achiever.	30	7x100	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				4	8	●	●	●			●	
Sony STR-DB795	300	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Cracking seven-channel all-rounder.	99	7x100	●	●	●	●			●				4	8	●	●	●			●	
Sony STR-DB900	400	03.05/ST	★★★☆☆	Classically digital - fierce and forward.	30	6x120	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				6	6	●	●	●			●	●
Yamaha DSP-AX757SE	500	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Frighteningly good for the money.	-	7x100	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				8	8	●	●	●			●	●

Yamaha DSP-AX757SE

Last year's DSP-AX750SE was one of the finest in its class, but this replacement is even better. It sounds much more expensive than it actually is, and will simply dismiss the boundaries of your living room, transporting you to the more spacious surroundings of a real cinema. Buy one today – it's a fabulous product.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION BEST IN CLASS

Yamaha RX-V1500	700	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Fully loaded and performs superbly.	40	7x120	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			11	8	●	●	●			●	●
BUDGET £801 and over																									
Arcam DiVA AVR250	1000	Awd.04	★★★★★	Best for £750-£1000 in Awards 2004.	30	7x75	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				7	8	●	●	●			●	●
Arcam DiVA AVR300	1300	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Stunning with the DV79 DVD player.	25	7x100	●	●	●	●		●	●				9	8	●	●	●		●	●	●
Denon AVC-AIIXV	2500	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Most of the ability of its bigger brother.	-	7x140	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	12	8	●	●	●	●		●	
Denon AVC-AIXV	4000	04.05/GT	★★★★★	Veritable leviathan, truly world-class.	-	10x170	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	16	22	●	●	●	●		●	
Denon AVR-3805	1000	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Very impressive, great with DVD3910.	56	7x120	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				8	8	●	●	●			●	
Harman-Kardon AVR 630	1000	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Good performer with great usability.	30	7x75	●	●	●	●							7	8	●	●	●			●	●
Harman-Kardon DPR2005	1300	Awd.04	★★★★☆	Slimline, classy all-digital receiver.	30	7x120	●		●	●	●	●	●				12	8	●	●	●			●	●
Lexicon RV-8	5000	02.05/FT	★★★★☆	Capable, flexible and very well-built.		7x140	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	8	8	●	●	●			●	●
NAD T763	900	12.04/GT	★★★★☆	Enjoyable listen but not a feature king.	30	6x100	●	●	●	●	●	●					6	8	●	●	●				
NAD T773	1200	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Exciting with music and movies.		7x110	●			●	●	●					10	8	●	●	●		●		
Onkyo TX-NR5000E	4000	04.05/GT	★★★★★	Stupendous with real staying power.	40	7x200	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	10	8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Parasound Halo C1/A51	8500	08.03/FT	★★★★☆	Exceptional pairing - but pricey.		5x250	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	11	7	●	●	●		●	●	●
Pioneer VSA-AX10Ai	3000	04.05/GT	★★★★★	Performs astonishingly well - a fine buy.	-	7x150	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	12	8	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Pioneer VSX-AX5Ai	1300	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Classy paired with the DV-868AVi-S.		7x100	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		9	8	●	●	●	●	●		
Primare SPA21	2000	09.05/FT	★★★★★	An elegant, great-sounding amp.	-	5x100	●		●	●	●	●					5	8	●	●	●				●
Rotel RSX-1056	1195	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Genuinely classy and a great listen.	30	5x75	●		●	●	●	●	●				7	10	●	●	●			●	●
Rotel RSX-1067	1795	08.04/FT	★★★★☆	Sublime sound but the price is high.	30	7x100			●				●				7	10	●	●	●				
Sony TA-DA9000ES	2600	05.04/FT	★★★★★	A huge, stunning all-digital debut.	-	7/200	●		●	●	●	●					12	8	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Yamaha DSP-Z9	3300	03.04/FT	★★★★★	Best amp over £1000 in Awards 2004.		9.1/170W	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	12	10	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

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RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

GLOSSARY
page 186

Processors

Team with a power amp for a high-end multichannel solution

BUDGET Up to £10000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Pro-Logic II	Pro-Logic IIx	Dolby Digital EX	DTS Neo:6	DTS Matrix	DTS Discrete	DTS 96/24	THX	THX EX	THX Ultra2	External inputs	Pre-outs	Analogue in	Coax digital in	Opt digital in	FireWire in	PC in	Digital opt out	Digital coax out
SURROUND MODES															INPUTS & OUTPUTS								
Arcam FMJ AV8	3150	05.03/ST	★★★★★	Superb - paired with the P7 power amp, simply stunning.	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	9		●	●		●			●

Arcam FMJ AV8

We tested the AV8 alongside the P7 multichannel amplifier and found its ability without match at this price level. Comprehensively equipped with the latest decoding modes, it's also a breeze to set up and install, making this Arcam processor the ideal hub for a multichannel music and movie set-up.

Cyrus AV8	1100	05.03/ST	★★★☆☆	Affordable 5.1 channel system with three SmartPower amps.	●										3	6	●	●	●				
Krell HTS7.1	8998	01.04/FT	★★★★★	Class leader - comfortable with music and movies.	●		●	●	●	●		●	●		10	8	●	●	●				
Lexicon MC-12	8100	04.02/FT	★★★★★	On our electronic elite shortlist - it's jaw-droppingly good.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	8	7	●	●	●			●	●
Lexicon MC-8 (balanced)	5750	12.03/FT	★★★★★	A belter - almost as much ability as its MC-12B brother.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	8	6	●	●	●			●	●
Meridian 861	9833	02.00/FT	★★★★★	Brilliant, better-sounding than almost everything else.	●	●	●					●	●	●	n/a	8	●	●	●		●	●	●
Meridian G68ADV	4995	10.04/FT	★★★★★	Fantastic - a very fine niche product.	●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●	5	6	●	●	●				●
Myryad MXD6000/MXA7150	5900	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Sombre appearance but a top-class performer.	●		●	●	●	●					9	8	●	●	●				
Naim AV2	2395	12.02/FT	★★★★★	AV2 and NAP V150 power amp - truly thrilling combination.	●		●	●							10	8	●	●	●			●	●
Parasound Halo C1	5000	08.03/FT	★★★★☆	Strong surround abilities when paired with the A51 amp.	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	11	7	●	●	●		●	●	●
Parasound Halo C2	3500	11.03/FT	★★★★☆	Pricey but excellent kit with fine sound and huge appeal.	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	11	8	●	●	●		●	●	●
Rotel RSP-1068	995	11.04/FT	★★★★☆	Fistful of features and solid performance; just short of special.		●	●	●			●				8	8	●	●	●		●		
Rotel RSP-1098	2295	02.04/FT	★★★★★	Terrific - worthy of comparison with much pricier designs.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				8	8	●	●	●		●	●	●

Subwoofers

Bass reinforcement for both home cinema and hi-fi

BUDGET Up to £2095

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Power (w)	Driver (cm)	Cabinet (hwd) cm	Ported	Sealed	Line inputs	Speaker in	Line outputs	Speaker out	Phase invert	Finishes
Acoustic Energy Aegis Compact	300	05.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Not the worst, but others give more weight and depth.	A150	22	36x38x31	●		●	●				2
ATC C-4	2350	10.04/GT	★★★★☆	Rhythmic and musical, at ease with pretty much anything.	650	31	58x50x50		●		●			●	Bk
Audio Pro B1.36	400	04.05/GT	★★★★☆	Worthy choice if you want plenty of thump from a compact box.	200	25	45x35x39	●		●	●		●	●	Bk
B&W ASW300	250	05.04/GT	★★★★☆	Offers a fair slice of low-end weight and ability for the price.	A100	20	41x33x38	●		●	●	●	●	●	2
B&W ASW675	650	10.02/GT	★★★★★	Cracking little sub that will suit more than DM600S3 owners.	500	25	34x34x41		●	●		●		●	3
B&W ASW750	1200	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in 03 Awards. Solid bass delivered with power.	A1000	30	44.40.48		●	●		●		●	5
B&W PV1	950	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Best subwoofer over £900 in Awards 2004. Remarkable.	500	2x20	34x29x35		●	●	●	●		●	Sl
Dynaudio SUB300	900	10.04/GT	★★★☆☆	The level of performance fails to live up to its price tag.	200	24	34x32x47	●		●				●	4
Energy S8.3	260	10.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Does a decent enough job but it is not going to blow your mind.	A100	20	42x28x36	●		●	●			●	3
Epos ELS SUB	380	04.05/GT	★★★★★	Performs well with both music and movies - good price too.	300	25	37x34x45		●	●	●	●	●	●	3
Eton E300	695	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	Good design - When right it's capable of power and authority.	A300	25	40x35x30		●	●	●	●	●	●	4
Jamo D7Sub	999	10.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Specs look good on paper but it fails to deliver in use.	400	38	49x59x44		●	●					Gr
KEF PSW 3500	599	05.05/FT	★★★☆☆	By no means a bad product but it fails to offer anything special.	300	30	45x60x40		●	●		●		●	4
Linn Sizmik 10.25 (each)	995	10.01/FT	★★★☆☆	A neat design but outstripped by similarly priced competitors.	500	25	39x36x36		●	●	●	●		●	4
M&K MX-350 MkII (THX)	1895	04.03/GT	★★★★★	Little short of breathtaking - partner with pedigree equipment.	A75	20	58x39x51		●	●	●			●	Bk
M&K V1250THX	895	06.99/FT	★★★★★	Part of the 750THX package - stunning home cinema performer.	125	30	46x39x58		●	●				●	Bk
Magnat Omega 300	499	12.01/ST	★★☆☆☆	Respectable performance, but disappointing lack of real depth.	A100	30	46x52x49		●	●	●	●	●	●	Bk
Mission m5as	500	10.02/GT	★★★★★	One of the most musical subs. A winner if you've the space.	350	30	58x35x51	●		●	●			●	3
MJ Acoustics Pro 100 (wood)	699	04.02/FT	★★★★★	Superb punch with excellent extension - not for small rooms.	100	2x20	37x59x31		●	●	●			●	6
MJ Acoustics Pro 50 (paint)	299	06.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy Awards 2002. Awesome clout from a tiny enclosure.	50	20	33x28x28		●	●	●			●	2
MJ Acoustics Pro-50 (wood)	349	12.01/ST	★★★★★	Incredibly small, very fast and agile - not ideal for big rooms.	A50	20	33x28x28		●	●	●			●	6
MJ Acoustics Reference 1 MkII	799	10.04/GT	★★★★☆	Attractive proposition and certainly worth an audition.	150	27	49x42x32	●		●	●	●		●	6
MJ Acoustics Ref. 100 (paint)	350	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy Awards 03. Quality sub with a gutsy performance.	120	20	33x28x28		●	●	●			●	2
MJ Acoustics Ref. 150 (wood)	629	Awd.03	★★★★☆	Strong sub that works well with both movies and music.	150	25	36x30x29		●	●	●	●		●	6
MJ Acoustics Reference 200	650	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Capable, compact sub but there's plenty of competition.	200	25	30x30x36		●	●	●	●		●	9
Monitor Audio ASW 100	300	05.04/GT	★★★★☆	A solid all-rounder that should appeal in most set-ups.	A120	25	32x32x34	●		●	●			●	2
Monitor Audio FB210	700	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	Big bold sound - but it's not a sub for smaller spaces.	250	2x25	50x37x37	●		●	●			●	2
Mordaunt-Short MS309	230	05.04/GT	★★★★★	First really cheap sub ever to impress us - bargain bass boost.	A150	25	37x37x37	●			●				3
Mordaunt-Short MS909W	500	04.05/GT	★★★★☆	Fine effort that will work well in a wide range of systems.	200	30	42x42x42	●		●	●	●		●	2
Pioneer SW2505	600	10.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Can't match its rivals in terms of overall quality.	250	30	43x48x43		●	●				●	Bch
Quad L Series	700	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Best subwoofer £600-£900 in Awards 2004.	300	30	53x34x47		●	●	●	●		●	4
REL Acoustics Q-150E MkII	500	09.03/FT	★★★★★	Product of the Year Awards 03. Sensible but effective revamp.	150	25	32x29x33		●	●	●			●	Bk
REL Acoustics Q201E (paint)	725	02.01/FT	★★★★★	Great extension and muscularity - one of the best small subs.	200	25	33x30x35		●	●	●			●	Bk
REL Acoustics Q400E (paint)	1000	09.00/FT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Not big, but it sounds gigantic.	400	30	42x39x43		●	●	●			●	Bk
REL Acoustics Quake (paint)	350	12.02/FT	★★★★★	REL's pocket rocket merits instant inclusion on any audition list.	100	20	29x25x27		●	●	●			●	2
REL Acoustics Quake (wood)	425	10.02/GT	★★★★★	Produces prodigious bass considering its diminutive stature.	100	20	29x25x27		●	●	●			●	2
REL Acoustics Stadium III	1500	10.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy Awards 2002. Stunning performer in large rooms.	200	25	56x59x39	●			●			●	5
REL Acoustics Stampede (paint)	550	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Best subwoofer £300-£600 in Awards 2004.	100	20	40x28x29		●	●	●			●	2
REL Acoustics Storm 5	1000	04.05/FT	★★★★★	Seriously impressive product from Welsh wizard REL.	200	25	52x35x37		●	●	●	●		●	6
REL Acoustics Strata 5 (wood)	800	06.04/FT	★★★★★	Combines user-friendly appeal with excellent sonic ability.	A150	250	32x46x33		●	●	●			●	6

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

GLOSSARY
page 186

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Subwoofers continued..

Bass reinforcement for both home cinema and hi-fi

BUDGET Up to £2095

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Power (w)	Driver (cm)	Cabinet (hwd) cm	Ported	Sealed	Line Inputs	Speaker in	Line outputs	Speaker out	Phase invert	Finishes
Sunfire Corporation True EQ	1695	10.04/GT	★★★★☆	Cute unit that emits bass like you wouldn't believe.	2700	2x25	28x28x28		●	●			●	●	Bk
Tannoy TS-12	499	04.05/GT	★★★★☆	Not the last word in subs but it's mighty impressive, all the same.	500	30	37x34x34		●	●		●		●	Bk
Velodyne CHT-12R	469	01.05/FT	★★★★★	Ideal way to upgrade your entry-level loudspeaker package.	200	30	46x38x50	●		●	●	●	●		3
Wharfedale Diamond SW150	250	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Subwoofer Product of the Year in Awards 2004.	A150	25	33x33x37	●		●	●	●	●	●	3

Wharfedale Diamond SW150

The SW150 is the entry-level sub in the Diamond range, but its performance speaks volumes. Immediately apparent are the amount of weight and sense of authority that this sub lays down. Considering the price, the detail and definition to the bass are controlled and cohesive - equally adept with movies and music.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
SUBWOOFER
WHARFEDALE DIAMOND SW150

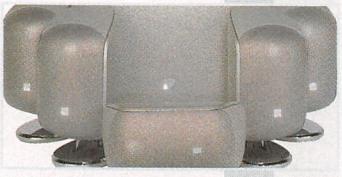
Yamaha YST-SW215	180	10.03/GT	★★☆☆☆	The price makes it tempting, but performance is well below par.	150	20	29x36x32	●		●	●			●	Bk
Yamaha YST-SW315	270	09.03/FT	★★★☆☆	A reasonable subwoofer, but it's not good enough to excite.	270	25	24x59x45	●		●	●			●	Bk

Compact speaker packages

Surround sound enjoyment from small, stylish speaker systems

BUDGET Up to £4500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	System max power (w)	Lowest sens (db/w/m)	Lowest imp (ohms)	DIMENSIONS (hwd) Front	Centre	Rear	Subwoofer	Biwire	Finishes
Anthony Gallo Nucleus Micro	1250	01.03/FT	★★☆☆☆	Dinky satellites that are a style guru's dream.	100	89	8	10 dia	10 dia	10 dia	18x28dia		8
Arcaydis AK5.1	1092	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	A sense of scale that others find hard to match.	50	90	3.9	30x16x9	30x16x9	30x16x9	39x29x33		2
Audica CS-system 1	650	03.04/FT	★★★★★	Innovative and thoughtful - a real eye-opener.	100	87	4	-	9x80x19	19x17x19	42x35x35		2
Audica CS-system 3	1100	05.05/ST	★★★★☆	Handsome and aurally good-natured but it's expensive.	100	87	4	105x8x10	9x28x19	19x7x19	39x40x40		2
Audio Pro Cinema Precision	500	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Decent, but the overall sound lacks excitement.	50	88	8	21x10xx8	21x10xx8	21x10xx8	32x32x32		Al
B&W MT-20	975	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Classy and competent - staggering value for money.	100	85	8	24x11x17	24x11x17	24x11x17	33x33x39		Sl



B&W MT-20

The latest B&W style package looks great, as you'd expect. It's available in black, silver or white finishes, and its elegant design is solidly constructed. Importantly, the MT-20 sounds great, too, revelling in opportunities to show off its detail, timing and dynamics. Overall, they're staggering value for money.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION BEST IN CLASS

B&W MT-30	1575	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Flagship B&W package – includes awesome PV1 sub.	100	85	4.8	24x11x17	11x24x17	24x11x17	34x29x35		3
B&W VM1/AS1	850	09.03/GT	★★★★☆	Excellent package, but newer rivals have eclipsed it.	100	91	8	52x12x9	52x12x9	52x12x9	38x25x38		3
Blue Sky Sky System 1	3166	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	Remarkable - genuine rival for established brands.	A2x100	-	-	31x20x30	20x31x30	31x20x30	46x43x56		Bk
Bose Acoustimass 10 Series III	800	09.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Fair-sounding and it's very small, sub apart.	100	-	4	16x8x10	16x8x10	16x8x10	42x21x64		3
Bose Acoustimass 15 Series II	1050	02.03/ST	★★★★☆	Delivers thrills without filling the room with boxes.	200	-	4	16x8x10	16x8x10	16x8x10	42x74x20		3
Cabasse XO2	750	05.05/ST	★★★★☆	This compact, elegant system is powerful and cohesive.	70	92	8	13x13x10	13x13x10	13x13x10	37 x26 x37		2
Canton CD 4.25 (+ CD50)	1660	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Offers a compelling blend of looks and ability.	120	86.5	4	101x9x10	9x43x10	101x9x10	47x30x44		Al
Canton Movie CD 1	480	Awd.03	★★★★★	Tiny kit at a great price - outstanding option.	45	86.5	4	14x9x10	9x22x10	14x9x10	39x24x43		Al
Castle Compact CC3	1000	02.04/FT	★★★★★	Classy - as excellent with music as with movies.	70	86	8	20x14x16	14x32x16	20x14x16	35x35x36		11
Eclipse TD 5.1 (307 + 316)	1300	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Discrete and covetable but the sound is not flawless.	70	80	8	16x12x16	16x12x16	16x12x16	35x24x30		3
Elac Cinema 3 ESP II	1200	11.04/ST	★★★★☆	Handsome but not value for money soundwise.	50	86	4	12x9x9	12x9x9	12x9x9	39x20x31		Al
Elac Cinema One 5.1	399	12.02/ST	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Highly effective.	60	84	6	12x9x10	12x9x10	12x9x10	37x28x38		2
Elac Cinema XL	499	03.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Good looking system with room-filling sound.	120	85	6	12x9x10	10x28x15	12x9x10	40x25x38		Al
Energy Act6	600	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Hamstrung by an irritating lack of integration.		87	8	16x17x11	16x17x11	16x17x11	41x25x35		Sl
Energy Encore	1000	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Quality kit that provides a good listen with movies.	125	89	8	19.13.19	12x40x20	19x13x19	35x35x36		Bk
Epos ELS3 5.1	956	01.05/GT	★★★★★	Exceptional - brings multichannel material to life.	100	87	4	27x17x20	17x51x21	27x17x20	37x34x45		3
Focal-JMlab 3SibXL/2Sib/Cub2	1099	02.05/FT	★★★★☆	Capable and refined package with a top class sub.	100	91	4	50x14x10	50x14x10	25x14x16	33x30x30		Bk
Infinity Oreus sub/sat package	800	03.03/FT	★★★★★	Breathtaking design - great sound and appeal.	100	85	6	36x12x11	12x36x10	36x12x11	37x25x45		Sl
Infinity TSS-750	500	04.04/ST	★★★★★	Appealing package with good performance and looks.	100	88	8	15x11x11	11x24x11	15x11x11	43x27x40		2
Jamo A325 PDD	499	04.04/ST	★★★★☆	Innovative, but sacrifices substance for style.	60	87	6	29x14x7	10x41x5	29x14x7	61x29x14		Sl
Jamo A410PDD	699	06.02/FT	★★★★☆	Attractive package with slim satellites and sub.	50	88	6	22x11x9	11x22x9	22x11x9	33x60x15		3
Jamo D6PTX	1499	03.04/FT	★★★★★	Delivers fabulous sound for a sensible price.	180	89	4	29x60x15	29x60x15	21x44x15	44x45x44		Bk
KEF KHT2005.2	600	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Product of the Year in the Awards 2003. Were £800.	100	88	8	20x13x15	20x13x15	20x13x15	37x32x32		2
KEF KHT1005	300	04.04/ST	★★★★★	Great with music and movies - tested at £500.	100	86	8	17x11x8	11x18x8	17x11x8	36x32x32		Al
KEF KHT9000ACE	4200	08.04/FT	★★★★☆	Stylish and capable of a surprisingly big sound.	150	88	8	56x25x13	25x56x13	56x25x13	47x50x50		Sl
KEF Q Compact AV	850	01.05/GT	★★★★☆	Detailed and insightful listen, but a little lightweight.	100	89	8	27x18x25	16x43x22	27x18x25	36x50x33	●	4
M&K K-5 Package	1495	06.05/FT	★★★★★	Builds on the strengths of its Award-winning forebear.	150	-	8	19x13x15	19x13x15	19x13x15	35x26x25		2
M&K K-7 Package	1750	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Fun-sounding set-up - front runner with movies.	200	90	4	33x12x15	12x33x15	33x12x15	25x35x24		Gry
M&K Xenon 25	2099	12.03/FT	★★★★☆	Forceful and weighty sound - largely effective.	200	n/a	4	16x10x15	16x10x15	16x10x17	47x39x51		4
Mirage Nanosat	600	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Classic example of a mismatch between sats and sub.	100	88	8	20x13x15	20x13x15	20x13x15	37x32x32		2
Mirage Omnisat/OM200	1800	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Clever - an intriguing alternative to the norm.	150	89	8	20x16x20	20x16x20	20x16x20	48x42x114		4
Mission Cinema M30	480	04.04/ST	★★★★★	Superb - compact and an all-round performer.	75	86	8	22x15x19	14x50x13	22x15x19	40x25x41	●	2
Mission fs1-AV	500	12.02/FT	★★★★☆	Stylish NXT kit that's just right for its market.	100	88	8	32x8x4	32x8x4	32x8x4	40x49x34		Si
Mission M-Cube	1000	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Combines looks, discretion and excellent sound.	150	85	4	9x9x9	9x9x9	9x9x9	32x32x32		2
MJ Acoustics Pro Cin 1/Pro 50	799	02.03/ST	★★★★☆	For those who want small, conventional speakers.	100	88	8	23x16x12	23x16x12	23x16x12	33x28x28		8

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

GLOSSARY
page 186

Compact speaker packages continued...

Surround sound enjoyment from small, stylish speaker systems

BUDGET Up to £4500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	System max power (w)	Lowest sens (db/w/m)	Lowest imp (ohms)	DIMENSIONS (hwd) Front	Centre	Rear	Subwoofer	Biwire	Finishes
Monitor Audio Radius	1050	05.05/ST	★★★★☆	Capable, tiny satellites but the subwoofer is too harsh.	100	87	8	19x12x14	12x35x10	19x12x14	37x23x32		5
Mordaunt-Short Genie	800	05.05/ST	★★★★★	Compact package Product of the Year in Awards 2004.	100	86	4	22x13x17	13x30x16	22x13x17	42x37x37		Sl
Morel SA2/C5	1495	05.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Well constructed but offers more style than substance.	120	85	8	18x14x9	16x51x16	18x14x9	No		3
ProAc Response Hexa 5.1	2496	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Best compact package over £1000 in Awards 2004	100	86	8	22x14x15	14x33x15	22x14x15	48x42x11	●	4
Richard Allan AV Micra	329	Awd.94	★★★★★	Ridiculously affordable with five speakers and a sub.	40	86	8	23x14x12	14x23x12	23x14x12	40x24x23		Gy
Richard Allan AV-1 SE	499	10.96	★★★★☆	A fine starter AV kit with a big sound and strong build	40	86	8	30x16x20	16x30x20	23x14x13	25x50x25	●	Gy
Richard Allan AV-1 System	399	06.94	★★★★★	Good bass weight and involving sound. A bargain.	40	86	8	30x16x20	14x23x13	23x14x13	25x50x25	●	Gy
Ruark Acoustics Vita 120	1700	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Long-running compact package - still a class act.	120	86	6	20x11x16	20x32x16	20x11x16	37x30x30	●	2
Sequence Style 20 5.1	599	05.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Refined to the point of boredom.	60	88	6	25x10x20	11x24x20	25x10x20	37x15x40		Al
Tannoy Arena	1199	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Blisteringly effective and fearsomely competitive.	100	88	8	19x13x18	14x25x15	19x13x18	44x35x21		4
Tannoy Arena (inc stands)	1580	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Class act - an audio and visual treat you must audition.	100	88	8	19x13x17	13x24x15	19x13x17	44x35x21		4
Triangle Galaxy 5.1	800	01.04/FT	★★★★☆	This package sounds great with both films and music.	75	90	8	20x13x12	20x13x12	20x13x12	32x32x32		Sl
Wharfedale Diamond 9 HCP	500	Awd.04	★★★★★	Best compact package up to £500 in Awards 2004.	75	86	6	24x15x17	12x33x13	24x15x17	33x33x36		4
Zingali Cinema I	1400	02.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Look appealing but let down in the sound department.	120	89	6	88x10x15	10x46x15	25x10x15	No		6

Full-size speaker packages

Larger surround sound speaker systems for better-quality sound

BUDGET Up to £5000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	System max power (w)	Lowest sens (db/w/m)	Nominal imp (ohms)	DIMENSIONS (hwd) Front	Centre	Rear	Subwoofer	Biwire	Finishes
Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo 3B	950	01.05/GT	★★★★★	Best full-size package under £1000 in Awards 2004.	150	88	8	88x22x19	17x46x19	36x19x24	36x38x31	●	2
Acoustic Energy Aelite 5.1	1895	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Brilliant performers they just melt into the background.	175	89	6	23x92x30	45x18x30	19x29x23	49x37x37	●	3
ATC C1 Collection	2123	08.03/ST	★★★★☆	Compact, but this set is capable of sounding huge.	300	84	8	30x16x21	16x60x21	30x16x21	44x35x35	●	3
Audio Pro Bravo FX	1895	09.05/FT	★★★★☆	Not without flaws, but well worth auditioning.	125	87	4	29x19x26	19x46x26	29x19x26	38x35x35		2
Audio Pro Image 44 system	1150	04.05/FT	★★★★★	Good-looking, well-made and a fine listen.	100	87	4	116x13x22	20x13x18	13x42x18	38x35x35		Bk
B&W 704 System	4000	Awd.04	★★★★★	Superb speakers that can make an incredible impact.	120	89	8	96x22x32	31x45x29	30x38x17	44x40x48	●	5
B&W DM 603 S3 (7 spks)	1850	08.03/ST	★★★★☆	Amazes - needs space to be heard at its best.	100	88	8	91x20x29	20x54x31	29x17x22	34x34x41	●	2
B&W DM300 series	900	02.03/FT	★★★★★	A superb set-up but too big for some rooms.	100	88	8	91x20x31	15x42x21	33x20x24	41x33x38	●	2
B&W DM600 series	1000	07.02/ST	★★★★★	A beautiful B&W system and it sounds great.	150	89	8	91x20x29	20x54x31	29x17x22	No	●	2
Canton CD300,360F,AS200SC	2700	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	Brings high style to audio's high brow.	170	n/a	4	120x12x16	12x120x16	120x12x16	45x30x47		2
Crane Audio Oceana 3	800	05.05/ST	★★★★☆	Polished looks and performance - worth an audition.	100	89	8	91x13x14	49x13x14	25x13x14	25x44x35		Al
Crane Audio Oceana 5	1100	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Surprisingly musical for a stylish system.	140	89	8	105x19x20	19x58x20	30x19x20	25x44x35		Al
DALI Concept	1293	01.05/GT	★★★★☆	Refined, inoffensive listen, with movies especially.	100	87	8	93x20x26	16x50x23	31x17x19	41x38x42		2
DALI Suite	2074	10.04/FT	★★★★☆	Impressive package that does many things very well	80	86	4	88x17x31	16x56x32	33x24x14	41x38x42	●	2
Eltax Summit 5.0/Impact 10	500	04.04/ST	★★★☆☆	A steal but it doesn't hang together too well.	130	87	8	84x21x25	14x36x20	20x14x20	35x35x35	●	Bch
Focal-JMlab Chorus	1326	10.04/FT	★★★★☆	Perfect for multichannel music enthusiasts.	90	91	8	90x20x27	15x44x25	30x18x20	34x32x38		3
Heybrook HB3/C1/.5/S200	980	07.02/ST	★★★★☆	Strong value - best with aggresive-sounding kit.	90	89	6	90x24x29	18x46x22	30x17x20	42x32x34	●	2
Jamo D7PEX	4499	02.03/FT	★★★★☆	Seven speakers and two subwoofers - good value.	100	87	4	27x59x17	27x59x17	27x51x13	49x59x44		Bk
JPW 203/208/201	457	04.04/ST	★★★☆☆	An assembly of components that fail to enthrall.	60	90	6	85x21x30	18x46x23	26x15x24	No		2
M&K 850THX	3550	07.03/FT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Highly innovative.	200	90	4	41x18x22	18x41x22	88x23x11	47x39x52		3
Mission 78se series	2650	08.03/ST	★★★★☆	Highly effective tweaks make the 78-series sing.	150	87	6	80x17x30	17x45x20	28x17x26	34x61x28	●	Ald
Mission Elegante e82	3990	09.04/FT	★★★★★	Best full-size package over £2000 in Awards 2004	150	85	8	96x30x33	17x44x25	28x16x25	42x37x40	●	Gry
Mission m3i Cinema	879	02.05/FT	★★★★★	One of the finest-sounding we've heard at the price.	75	88	8	95x20x30	17x43x23	26x17x28	41x28x50	●	3
Monitor Audio Bronze B2 AV	800	03.04/FT	★★★★★	Integration, crisp detail and lively dynamics.	80	88	6	35x19x25	16x46x16	29x29x13	32x32x34	●	Va
Monitor Audio Bronze B4 AV	950	01.05/GT	★★★★★	Gives a rollercoaster ride through music and movies.	80	91	6	85x19x26	16x46x16	29x29x13	32x32x34	●	Va

EVOKE-2XT

Luxury Portable Stereo DAB & FM Radio

- Quality audio, design and craftsmanship
- DAB digital plus FM
- Mains and battery powered
- Connect an iPod, CD or MiniDisc
- Kitchen timer and alarm
- Add new features via USB

ChargePAK READY

PURE

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
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Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

GLOSSARY
page 186

Full-size speaker packages continued...

Larger surround sound speaker systems for better-quality sound

BUDGET Up to £5000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	System max power (w)	Lowest sens (db/w/m)	Nominal imp (ohms)	DIMENSIONS (hwd) Front	Centre	Rear	Subwoofer	Biwire	Finishes
Monitor Audio GR20 AV	2800	10.02/FT	★★★★☆	This is a quality package with plenty of appeal.	100	88	6	93x20x30	20x56x23	23x36x18	n/a	●	4
Mordaunt-Short Avant 5.1	780	07.04/FT	★★★★★	Great-value - builds on strengths of the MS309 sub.	100	87	4	80x17x34	17x49x20	23x22x15	37x37x37		2
Mordaunt-Short Premiere	400	12.02/ST	★★★★☆	Strong performance in stereo and surround.	80	86	4	18x11x13	11x28x13	18x11x13	31.31.31		2
Mordaunt-Short Premiere Plus	500	10.03/FT	★★★★☆	As cinematic experiences go this is a class act.	80	86	4	18x11x13	11x28x13	18x11x13	37x37x37		3
Quad L Series (12L/11L/LSub)	1930	Awd.04	★★★★★	Full-size package Product of the Year in Awards 2004.	150	86	6	33x21x25	31x19x24	33x21x25	53x34x47	●	4

Quad L Series (12L/11L/L Sub)

Quads 11L standmount speakers and the L Subwoofer are Award-winners in their own rights, the 11Ls several years running – while the 12L speakers have been widely praised during their lifetime. Needless to say, the L Centre complements the system superbly. Beautiful to look at, to hear and – undoubtedly – to own!

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
FULL-SIZE SPEAKER PACKAGE
QUAD 12L/L CENTRE/11L/L SUBWOOFER

Ruark Acous. Prologue II (7 spk)	3165	08.03/ST	★★★★☆	An appealing solution with extra Epilogue II surrounds	120	87	6	96x21x24	17x45x19	27x19x23	42x43x43	●	4
Tannoy Eyris	2250	10.02/FT	★★★★☆	Better for music, including multichannel, than movies	75	88	8	102x20x26	21x43x26	24x28x17	n/a	●	2
Tannoy Sensys 5.1	1200	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	No shortage of ability, or cubic capacity - excellent sub.	110	88	8	91x21x29	21x35x28	35x21x29	32x29x29		3
Triad Silver Series	4180	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	Great for home cinema, but for music it can be beaten	125	83	4	48x22x24	22x48x24	36x34x9	41x40x39		22
Vienna Schön/Web/Berg/Sub	3700	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	Stylish speakers that sound amazingly good.	180	91	4	105x27x9	27x50x9	27x21x9	40x64x22		Al
Wharfedale Diamond 8 Cinema	400	09.01/FT	★★★★★	Look and sound more expensive than they are.	100	86	6	80x21x26	18x45x18	30x20x18	n/a		2
Wharfedale Diamod 9.4 series	995	01.05/GT	★★★★☆	An involving sound but not an all-rounder.	100	86	6	80x22x30	19x40x23	30x19x28	42x42x38	●	5
Wharfedale Evolution Cinema	1150	10.03/FT	★★★★☆	Great - add a subwoofer and you're in business.	100	88	6	88x23x40	17x42x30	37x35x16	n/a	●	Va

PC & MP3 speakers

Add sound to your PC, MP3 or games console

BUDGET Up to £500

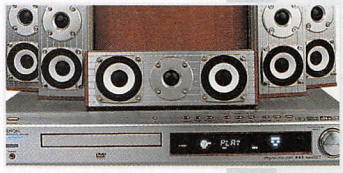
PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	System max power (w)	Lowest sens (db/w/m)	Lowest Imp (ohms)	DIMENSIONS (hwd) Front	Centre	Rear	Sub	Biwire	Finishes
Altec Lansing 5100	100	06.04/GT	★★★★☆	Check it out if you're not bothered about low-end grunt.	73	70	4	18x6x6	7x16x5	18x6x6	30x17x34		Al
Altec Lansing inMotion iM3	140	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Jack of all trades iPod system - decent sound.	A4	-	-	20x14x3(unit)	-	-	-		Wt
Altec Lansing inMotion iMini	110	08.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Inoffensive offering for iPod Mini owners.	A4	-	8	11x18x3(unit)	-	-	-		Wt
Bose SoundDock	249	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Superb sound quality for your iPod, but it's not cheap.	n/a	-	-	30x17x16(unit)	-	-	-		Wt
Eclipse TD TD307 PAWH	400	02.05/GT	★★★★☆	Stunning sonic image when used with an MP3 player.	12/A12	80	8	12x16x16	-	-	14x15x15		3
Intempo iDS-01	40	08.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Decent debut into the iPod accessory market.	6	-	-	23x12x9(unit)	-	-	-		Wt
JBL On Stage	130	08.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Eye-catching iPod speaker system - decent sound.	A6	-	-	18x18x5(unit)					Wt
JBL On Tour	70	02.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Boombox affair for use with MP3s, CD and computers.	A3	-	-	4x18x9	-	-	-		Wt
Logic3 iStation	60	08.05/GT	★★★☆☆	An iPod docking station - decent stereo/sub solution.	A6/A6	-	-	14x20x4(unit)	-	-	inc		Wt
PodGear Pocket Party	25	08.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Super-light iPod travel speaker - could excel in a tent.	1	-	-	2.9x8x2.9	-	-	-		Wt
PodGear Shuffle Station	35	08.05/GT	★★★☆☆	For Shuffle owners - affordable, but it's no stunner.	3	-	4	16x10x3(unit)	-	-	-		Wt
Trust 4500P	50	06.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	Spend more and spare yourself the sonic experience.	15	-	-	16x10x10	16x10x10	16x10x10	18x19x31		Bk

Home cinema in a box (with DVD)

Instant surround sound solutions for maximum convenience and style

BUDGET Up to £3000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Power (w)	PLAYS DVD-A	SACD	MP3	DVD+R/+RW	DVD-R/-RW	DVD-RAM	SURROUND MODES Pro-Logic II	Pro-Logic IIx	Dolby Digital EX	DTS Neo:6	DTS-ES Matrix	DTS-ES Discrete	DTS 96/24	Composite out	Component out	S-Video out	RGB Scart out	Audio outs/ins
Bose Lifestyle 18	1750	11.03/FT	★★★☆☆	We like it, but the performance is around for less.	200			●											●	●	●		8
Denon D-M51DVS	500	12.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Likeable 2.1 system, commendable in Dolby Virtual mode.	2x35/A100			●		●		●							●		●	●	2
Denon DHT-500SD	500	07.05/GT	★★★★★	All-in-one system Product of the Year in Awards 2004.	6x100			●		●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	2



Denon DHT-500SD

Our all-in-one Product of the Year proves that home cinema in a box systems don't have to compromise on features or performance. Great pictures and sound from this good-looking, slimline package – this is as close to budget separates as you can get from an all-in-one-system. Highly recommended!

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
ALL-IN-ONE SYSTEMS
DENON DHT-500SD

Denon DHT-550SD	750	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Doesn't quite justify the extra £250 over the DHT-500SD.	6x100			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	19
Jamo DVR50/A305PDD 5.1	649	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Impressive, but the A355 PDD package is better.	5x50			●	●	●		●							●	●	●	●	5
Jamo DVR50/A325PDD	799	11.03/FT	★★★★☆	Great blend of minimalist style and performance.	5x50			●	●	●		●							●	●	●	●	5
Jamo DVR50/A355PDD	899	12.03/GT	★★★★★	A lot of thought has clearly gone into this cracking kit.	5x50			●	●	●		●							●	●	●	●	5
JVC EX-A1	400	07.04/GT	★★★★☆	Compact solution for smaller rooms - decent sonic delivery.	2x30														●	●		●	2
KEF KIT 100	1200	12.04/GT	★★★★☆	Best home cinema in a box over £1000 in Awards 2004.	4x40/60			●	●	●		●							●	●	●	●	3
Linn Classik Movie Di	2500	02.03/GT	★★★☆☆	This is a neat solution, but limited video performance.	40x5			●				●							●	●	●	●	10
Nakamichi SoundSpace 8 1/2	2599	01.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Capable of good results - but it's far from cheap.	5x10			●				●							●	●	●		5
Panasonic SC-HT880	500	07.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Good picture but sound and build are way below standard.	1000	●		●	●	●	●	●							●	●	●	●	1
Philips LX7500R	550	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Great buy at its new price-point - includes a DVD recorder.	5x100			●		●		●								●	●	●	2
Pioneer NS-DV990	800	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	It has plenty going for it, whether for movies or music.	6x60	●	●	●	●	●		●							●		●	●	5
Pioneer RCS-9H	1000	02.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	The only thing that impresses is its capacious hard disk.	5x100			●		●		●							●		●	●	6
Sharp SD-PX15H	500	09.04/ST	★★★☆☆	Sleek and stylish on the outside but it's ordinary inside.	6x35	●	●	●		●		●							●		●	●	1

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

GLOSSARY
page 186

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO BRITAIN'S BEST HI-FI

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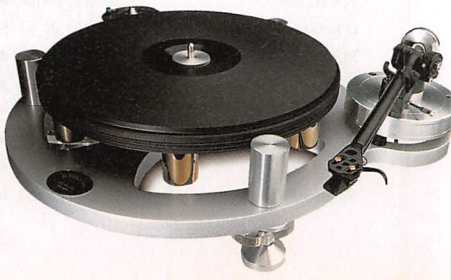

WHSmith

Subject to availability at selected WHSmith stores

Home cinema in a box (with DVD) cont...

Instant surround sound solutions for maximum convenience and style

BUDGET Up to £3000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Power (w)	PLAYS: DVD-A	PLAYS: SACD	PLAYS: MP3	PLAYS: DVD+R/+RW	PLAYS: DVD-R/-RW	PLAYS: DVD-RAM	SURROUND MODES: Pro-Logic II	SURROUND MODES: Pro-Logic IIx	SURROUND MODES: Dolby Digital EX	SURROUND MODES: DTS Neo:6	SURROUND MODES: DTS-ES Matrix	SURROUND MODES: DTS-ES Discrete	SURROUND MODES: DTS 96/24	Composite out	Component out	S-Video out	RGB Scart out	Audio outs/ins
Tatung THT5150S	149	03.05/FT	★★★★☆	Massively impressive for the price - very enjoyable system.	350			●				●								●	●	●	6
TEAC DV-L800/AG-L800	900	04.04/GT	★★★★☆	Looks good, but it is no advance on cheaper rivals.	6x50			●				●	●	●					●	●	●	●	6
TEAC Legacy 700/LS-L800	1100	12.03/GT	★★★★★	Product of the Year Awards 2003. Great all-round.	30x5/A100			●		●		●							●	●	●	●	8
TEAC Legacy 800/LS-L800	1300	Awd.03	★★★★☆	Cracking system with the right mix of style and substance.	5x50			●				●							●		●		8
Yamaha DVX-S200	450	09.04/ST	★★★★★	Excellent sound and progressive scan pictures.	5x100		●	●		●		●				●			●	●	●	●	2

Home cinema in a box

Surround sound add-ons for those who already own a DVD player

BUDGET Up to £2500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Power (w)	SURROUND MODES: Pro-Logic II	SURROUND MODES: Pro-Logic IIx	SURROUND MODES: Dolby Digital EX	SURROUND MODES: DTS NEO:6	SURROUND MODES: DTS-ES Matrix	SURROUND MODES: DTS-ES Discrete	SURROUND MODES: DTS 96/24	Composite out	Component out	S-Video out	RGB Scart out	Audio outs/ins
Acoustic Energy Aego P5 MkII	500	08.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Admirable performer but it doesn't look like good value.	125	●											3
Creative Inspire T7900	100	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	Good in parts - musically hit and miss but good for games.	6x8/1x20												1
Klegg M6 501R	399	06.02/ST	★★★☆☆	Tiny egg-shaped speakers will win fans, but sonic performance lags behind.	5x30												2
Klegg M6-501P	549	04.03/GT	★★★☆☆	The Klegg is a sexy decoder/speaker package, but not ideal for long-term.	5x30												5
Klegg M8-501	700	01.03/FT	★★★★★	Comprehensive and competent package with good power and drive.	5x100	●											5
Spherex Xbox 5.1	400	03.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Ideal for keen gamers. Fantastic spread of sound but it lacks all round ability.	300	●											4
Yamaha YSP-1	800	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	Surround sound without the clutter - just add a DVD to this one box.	40x2/2x20	●			●								4

Widescreen TVs

Conventional TVs that offer great performance and value

BUDGET Up to £5500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Screen size (in)	DECODING: Integrated digital	DECODING: Dolby Digital	DECODING: DTS	DECODING: Pro Logic II	DECODING: Pro Logic	DECODING: Progressive PAL	DECODING: Progressive NTSC	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: RGB Scart	Composite in	Component in	S-Video in	Phono in	Phono out	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Weight (kg)
Beko 324250WNS	350	UTV.04	★★★☆☆	Doesn't match the clarity and stability of others.	32								●	●					86x55x58	49
Goodmans GTV69RF2	350	05.04/GT	★★★★☆	Overall, a very competitive television for the money.	28								●	●					79x57x50	41
Goodmans GTV69W2DT	330	10.04/ST	★★★★☆	Sensibly priced integrated digital TV.	28							●	●			●			78x53x47	34
Loewe Aconda 9381HD/DR+	1900	05.05/GT	★★★★★	Best CRT TV/recorder combination in Awards 2004.	32								●	●	●	●	●	●	63x86x58	55
Loewe Aventos 3981 ZW	1099	04.03/FT	★★★★☆	Sounds great, but pipped for picture by its rivals.	32								●	●	●	●	●		60x81x56	53
Loewe Mimo 32	1350	07.04/FT	★★★★★	Unusual design, as much about performance as looks.	32								●						61x81x57	60.5
Loewe Nemos 32	1299	01.05/ST	★★★★☆	Not cheap, but a hugely desirable and flexible package.	32								●	●		●	●		60x90x55	57
Sagem Axium	2800	UTV.04	★★★☆☆	Consider for maximum screen area for your money.	50						●		●	●	●	●		●	90x116x37	42
Samsung WS-32Z108R	1700	05.04/FT	★★★★☆	Convenient kit with built-in 40GB hard-disk recorder.	32		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●				89.56.57	62
Sony KD-28DX200	950	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Stylish design and stunning pictures.	28	●							●	●		●			59x91x59	71
Thomson 32WH403S	439	UTV.04	★★★☆☆	Powerful sound but there are better - tested at £700.	32								●						90x56x56	56
Toshiba 32ZH46	829	01.04/GT	★★★★☆	Sleek, capable performer at an enticing price.	32								●			●	●		55x74x55	50
Toshiba 36ZP48	1700	Awd.04	★★★★☆	Big picture but hasn't got unrivalled quality on its side.	36		●				●	●	●	●		●			86x114x60	76

Plasmas & rear-projection TVs

Slimline, stylish televisions available in huge screen sizes

BUDGET Up to £6000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Screen size (in)	Integrated tuner	Resolution (wd)	INPUTS: Progressive PAL	INPUTS: Progressive NTSC	INPUTS: RGB Scart	INPUTS: Composite in	INPUTS: Component in	INPUTS: S-Video in	INPUTS: Phono in	Dimensions (hwd)	Weight (kg)
Fujitsu P42HHA40	3595	06.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Solid, but the performance/value equation just doesn't add up.	42		0124x1024	●	●	●		●	●	●	64x103x9	29.5
Hitachi 42PD5200	1900	07.04/ST	★★★★☆	Outstanding value - great specifications and performance.	42	●	1024x1024	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	103x64x9	35

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BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

GLOSSARY
page 186

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Plasmas & rear-projection TVs continued...

Slimline, stylish televisions available in huge screen sizes

BUDGET Up to £6000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Screen size (in)	Integrated tuner	Resolution (wd)	INPUTS: Progressive PAL	Progressive NTSC	RGB Scart	Composite in	Component in	S-Video in	Phono in	Dimensions (hwd)	Weight (kg)
Hitachi 42PD7200	2500	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	Very good indeed - Hi-Def-ready spec adds to its appeal.	42	●	1024x1024	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	68x105x10	37
Hitachi 55PMA550E	6000	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Excellent choice if you want a TV screen this big.	55		1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	86x139x11	63.5
LG RZ60PY10	8000	09.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Gargantuan and it looks gorgeous but the performance is poor.	60	●	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	93x171x32	86
Loewe Articos 55 (rear-proj)	4750	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Rear-projection DLP TV - highly impressive in every sense.	55	●	1280x720	●	●	●		●	●	●	103x117x55	80
Loewe Xelos A42	3499	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Possibly the best sounding plasma we've ever heard.	42	●	1024x1024	●	●	●		●	●	●	74x107x11	40
NEC 42XR3	2995	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	Authoritative picture performance but no tuner or scart.	42		16:9	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	61x102x9	29.5
Panasonic TH-37PW7	1860	05.05/GT	★★★★☆	Solid, stylish, if unspectacular piece of kit.	37		852x480			●					55x92x9	24
Panasonic TH-42PV500	2500	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Breathtaking picture quality via HDMI - matching rack £500.	42	●	1024x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	84x133x14	40

Panasonic TH-42PV500

Pansonic's Viera range caught our eye some time ago, with its persuasive plasmas and enticing LCDs. And the latest addition to the range is no exception: it hits the spot immediately with its picture clarity, detail and smoothness, and this 42in beauty is also High-Def-ready – so it won't be obsolete in 12 months time.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION BEST IN CLASS

Pioneer PDP-435FDE	2750	10.04/FT	★★★☆☆	A let down, it lacks the hoped-for visual sparkle (was £3700).	43	●	1024x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	65x112x9	26.8
Pioneer PDP-435XDE	3000	02.05/GT	★★★★★	Stunning design and peerless pictures via the HDMI input.	43	●	1024x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	65x112x9	27
Pioneer PDP-505XDE	4000	08.05/FT	★★★★★	If you've the room, this'll make every DVD a real viewing 'event'.	50	●	1280x768			●	●		●	●	74x127x9	32.8
Sagem Axium HD-D45 (rear-proj)	1999	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	DLP rear projection TV - big-screen action at an affordable price.	45		1280x720	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	106x79x37	28
Samsung SP50L7HX (rear-proj)	3500	03.05/GT	★★★★★	Fantastic value DLP rear-projection TV - outstanding with DVD.	50	●	1280x720	●		●	●	●	●		61x90x53	57
SIM2 Domino 55M	4000	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Excellent big screen - wonderful with both Hi-Def and DVD.	55		1280x720	●	●		●	●	●	●	98x132x41	54
SIM2 RTX55H (rear-projection)	7000	09.04/FT	★★★★★	Rear-projection DLP TV - possibly the world's best big-screen TV.	55	●	1280x720	●	●		●	●	●		122x150x42	85
Sony KDE-P37XS1	3400	01.05/GT	★★★★★	Best LCD/plasma TV 36-42in in Awards 2004.	37	●	1024x1024	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	69x114x29	38
Sony KDE-P42XS1	4300	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	Stylish with beautifully detailed and natural pictures but pricey.	42	●	1024x1024	●	●	●	●	●		●	75x123x29	39
ThemeScene RD50 (rear-proj)	2000	05.05/GT	★★★★☆	Rear-projection DLP TV - great value supersize television.	50	●	1280x720	●		●	●	●	●		90x117x38	41
Thomson 50DLY644 (rear-proj)	3000	09.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Great idea undermined by poor execution - shop elsewhere.	50	●	1280x720	●	●	●			●	●	99x119x42	46.3
Tiny Focus 4200	1295	02.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Unfortunately, the price is the only competitive thing about it.	42	●	853x480	●	●	●	●	●	●		105x64x8.5	30
Toshiba 42WP46	2199	02.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Below-average price but sadly the performance is a mixed bag.	42	●	852x480	●	●	●	●	●		●	76x127x32	51
Toshiba 46WM48 (rear-proj)	2000	03.05/GT	★★★★☆	Rear-projection DLP TV - good jack-of-all-trades television.	46	●	1280x720			●		●	●	●	81x135x39	35
Yamaha PDM-4210	3995	07.04/ST	★★★★☆	Fine performer in every sense - in the upper echelon of plasmas.	42	●	1024x1024	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	64x103X9	35.2

LCD TVs

Slim TVs on offer in every size from portable to big-screen

BUDGET Up to £5000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Screen size (in)	Aspect ratio	Resolution	INPUTS: Progressive PAL	Progressive NTSC	RGB Scart	Composite in	Component in	S-Video in	Phono in	Dimension (hwd) cm	Weight (kg)
B&O BeoVision 6-22	2615	UTV.04	★★★★☆	Expensive but utterly gorgeous piece of vision kit.	22	16:9	1280x720			●				●	59x48x16	18
B&O BeoVision 6-26	3250	02.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Good picture and sound but it carries a hefty price tag.	26	15:9	1280x720			●				●	58x71x18	24
B&O BeoVision 7	5995	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	Amazing - sublime picture, impressive sound and looks.	32	16:9	1366x768			●					57x88x16	30
Bush LCD27TV005	599	08.05/ST	★★★☆☆	You can't be too harsh at this price but don't expect miracles.	27	16:9	1280x768				●		●	●	50x78x21	13
Hitachi 32LD7200	1500	09.05/FT	★★★★★	HD-ready and performs well in all the right places.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	55x84x12	18
Humax LGB-26DTT	1500	08.05/ST	★★★★☆	Give this serious consideration if you see it at a better price.	26	16:9	1280x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	54x70x23	23
Iiyama ProLite L403W	3512	08.04/FT	★★☆☆☆	Poor-quality, its overpriced, overweight and looks awful.	40	16:9	1280x768	●	●	●	●		●	●	59x94x11	35
JVC LT-32D50	1800	04.05/ST	★★☆☆☆	Decent performance but it can't justify its price.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●		●	●	●	64x83x30	19.8
JVC LT-32DS	2000	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Sizzling set - looks great with DVD and high def content.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	61x80x23	20

JVC LT-32DS

Looks great with DVD and off-air pictures are excellent, too, with even rapid motion scenes causing few problems. Most impressive is the depth of field: helped by class-challenging contrast and sharp edges. Feed it some High-Def content and the results are stunning – this flatscreen will give you years of pleasure!

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION BEST IN CLASS

LG RZ32LZ50	999	04.05/ST	★★☆☆☆	Underwhelming performer, there are too many flaws.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●		●	●		59x88x12	
Loewe Spheros 37 HD/DR+	3250	10.04/GT	★★★★☆	Very tempting - this version has a hard disk recorder/internet.	37	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	68x99x9	31
Loewe Spheros R37 Masterpiece	5800	05.05/FT	★★★★☆	Expensive, but a fine performer and great long-term investment.	37	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	106x99x8.8	67
Loewe Xelos A26	1500	08.05/ST	★★★★★	Fine sounding and outstanding pictures - High-Def-ready.	26	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	52x70x12	14
Loewe Xelos SL 37HD/DR+	2700	01.05/GT	★★★★☆	Offers the potential of lots of extras under one TV roof.	37	16:9	1366X768	●	●	●	●	●	●		68x99x9	22
Loewe Xelos SL20	799	06.04/ST	★★★★☆	Bit of a head-turner in both design and performance stakes.	20	4:3	640x480			●				●	54x54x26	9
Panasonic TX-32LXD50	1800	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Terrific proposition spoiled by not having an HDMI input.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●		●	●	●	●	80x57x14	21
Panasonic TX26LXD500	1600	08.05/ST	★★★★★	Panasonic's best-ever small-screen LCD - it won't disappoint.	26	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	56x86x30	21
Philips 17PF9946	700	12.04/ST	★★★★☆	Gorgeous aesthetics and the picture quality is good.	17	16:9	1280x768			●	●		●	●	45x33x18	5
Philips 26PF9946	900	08.05/ST	★★★★☆	Performance and price make it an ideal second-room screen.	26	16:9	1280-768			●	●		●	●	43x69x24	11
Philips 32PF9986	2500	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Best LCD/plasma TV 30-36in in Awards 2004. Now £500 less.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	61x100x10	20
Philips 37PF9986	4000	01.05/GT	★★★★☆	The high price and some picture problems mean it's outgunned.	37	16:9	1366 x 768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	68x113x10	27
Sagem Axium HD-L27	999	08.05/ST	★★★★☆	Future-proof, it looks the part and performs well.	26	16:9	1280x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	45x88x14	15
Samsung LW32A33W	1500	04.05/ST	★★★☆☆	Attractive price but the picture quality is mediocre.	32	16:9	1280x768	●	●	●		●	●	●	61x86x33	23
Sharp LC-15L1E (wireless)	700	04.04/FT	★★★★☆	Wireless TV; tested at £1400, new price makes it go up a star.	15	4:3	640x480			●	●		●	●	35x49x17	6

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☆ Claim a 42" Panasonic Plasma for £995 when you buy this system

Want Arcam Alto speakers instead? Add £50

Arcam - *DV 78 & AVR250*

Save £100 **£1598**

This is the basis of a fab A/V system and can lead to even more savings. Add a 42" Panasonic screen for less than £2700. Buy any A/V speaker package and save and extra 10% on the speakers

☆ Claim a 42" Panasonic Plasma for £995 when you buy both items

Linn - *MovieDi & Komponent system*

£5550

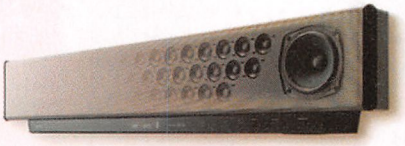
This has to be the sleekest lifestyle A/V system available. The Linn Classik Movie Di coupled with the ultra new Linn Komponent system. Fabulous looks - fabulous sound.

☆ Claim a 42" Panasonic Plasma for FREE! When you buy this system.

The new Linn Komponent system is available for audition now. This system must be installed - call for details

Yamaha - *YSP-1 Sound Projector*

Save £50 **£749**



- ✓ Fits under a 42" plasma on the wall
- ✓ 20w x 2 & 2 x 40w for 120w output
- ✓ Separate Sub Woofer output
- ✓ Dolby DTS, Pro logic 2 & Neo 6
- ✓ True 5.1 channel sound output
- ✓ 2 optical, 1 digital 2 analogue O/put

Multichannel Surround Sound from A Single Component!
42 digital amplifiers power 40 sound beam drivers and two woofers to deliver genuine multichannel surround sound for an elegant home cinema system from the one box.

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Naim - *CD5i + Nait 5i* *with Epos M5 speakers.*

Buy this system and save £174 for this month ONLY!

A two channel system that just sings! For this month only buy the super Naim CD5i and Nait 5i combo and claim a pair of the fabulous Epos M5 speakers for half price Now that is deal worth listening to - call for details or pop in for an audition.

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Linn ✳ Naim ✳ PMC ✳ ProAc ✳ Project ✳ Pure
Pioneer ✳ Quad ✳ REL ✳ Rotel ✳ Spendor
Sennheiser ✳ Sugden ✳ Vibe ✳ Yamaha

THE A LIST

Arcam Solo Lifestyle system *NEW!*	£999.00
Arcam DiVA CD73T CD Player	£399.00
Arcam DiVA CD192T CD Player	£849.00
Arcam FMJ DV29 DVD HDMI Player *NEW!*	£1599.00
AVI S21 Lab series Amplifier	£1499.00
Denon DM31/SCM51 CD System	£249.00
Linn Genki CD Player	£995.00
Linn Exotik Preamp	£1750.00
Linn Classik Music System	£799.00
Naim CD 5X Player	£1450.00
Naim Nait 5i Amplifier	£699.00
Naim NAC 202 Preamp	£1375.00
Naim NAP 200 Power Amp	£1345.00
Naim Ariva Speakers	£1250.00
Pure DRX 701ES DAB Tuner	£224.00
Rotel RCD-02 CD Player	£379.00
Rotel RA-02 Amplifier	£349.00
Pro-ject Debut MM inc Arm/Cart	£115.00
B&W 704 Speakers	£1400.00
B&W VM1 lifestyle 5 Spkr+Sub	£850.00
Epos M5 Bookshelf speakers	£349.00
Linn Katan Speakers	£650.00
Quad 11L Speakers	£379.00

E&OE - Arcam, KEF - Shop callers only

Ex-Display & Pre-Owned

Arcam FMJ CD33 CD Player (was 1349)	**£895.00**
Arcam FMJ DV27 DVD Player (was 1750)	**£595.00**
Arcam DT81 DAB Radio Tuner (was 649)	**£399.00**
Arcam FMJ AV8 Preamp (was 3149)	**£2190.00**
AVI S21 Lab series CD Player (was 1400)	**£959.00**
Denon DV1400 Muli-format DVD (was 399)	**£299.00**
Denon DV2900 Muli-format DVD (was 899)	**£499.00**
Denon AVR 2803 AV Receiver (was 649)	**£299.00**
Linn Karik CD Player S/H (New 1850)	**£499.00**
Linn Kairn Pro Preamp S/H (New 1400)	**£650.00**
Linn LK140 Power Amp S/H (New 875)	**£595.00**
Linn 5125 Power Amplifier (was 1800)	**£1095.00**
Linn 2250 Power amplifier (was 1995)	**£1195.00**
Linn Trikan Centre - Maple (was 549)	**£269.00**
Linn Exotik Preamplifier (was 1750)	**£1390.00**
Naim CDX CD Player S/H (New 2470)	**£1495.00**
Naim NAC102 Preamp S/H (New 1175)	**£699.00**
Naim NAP180 Power amp S/H (New 1200)	**£695.00**
Naim NAP250 Powe amp S/H (New 1910)	**£895.00**
Naim Flatcap2 Power supply (was 550)	**£395.00**
Naim Ariva Speakers - Maple (was 1250)	**£795.00**
Naim NBL Speakers - Beech (was 7700)	**£3595.00**
ProAc Studio 125 Spkrs Maple (was 999)	**£695.00**
REL Q100e Sub Woofer S/H (New 559)	**£219.00**
Sugden A21P Power amplifier (was 823)	**£575.00**
Vibe Zeta Subwoofer Blk (was 600)	**£399.00**

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LCD TVs continued...

Slim TVs on offer in every size from portable to big-screen

BUDGET Up to £5000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Screen size (in)	Aspect ratio	Resolution	INPUTS: Progressive PAL	Progressive NTSC	RGB Scart	Composite in	Component in	S-Video in	Phono in	Dimension (hwd) cm	Weight (kg)
Sharp LC-32GD1E	3000	11.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Stylish and well-connected, but the picture is plagued by noise.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	58x80x9	21
Sharp LC-37GD1E	4500	10.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Decent, but you're paying a premium for the build and finish.	37	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	65x92x9	23
Sharp LL-171ME	480	12.04/ST	★★★★☆	Decent level of performance at a wallet-friendly price.	17	16:9	1280x768			●	●		●	●	18x43x37	5.9
Sony KLV-L32M1	1900	04.05/ST	★★★★☆	Well-rounded performer but it is not 'HD Ready'.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●		●	●	●	60x84x11	19.7
Thomson 20LCDM03B	529	06.04/ST	★★★★☆	Clean image with DVD playback, struggles with movement.	20	4:3	1024x768	●	●	●		●			49x51x7	11
Thomson 27LCDB03B	989	09.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Useful range of features, shame the picture quality isn't better.	27	16:9	1280x768			●	●	●	●	●	45x83x9	17
Thomson 30LCDB03	1179	11.04/FT	★★☆☆☆	Not worth considering unless you are going to watch DVDs only.	30	16:9	1280x768			●			●		53x89x22	19.8
Toshiba 14VL44	380	05.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Affordable pricing, but not the finest LCD picture you'll ever see.	35	4:3	640x480			●	●		●		36x42x9	4.1
Toshiba 15VL33	399	07.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Good looks will take it a long way, but there are better around.	15	4:3	853x480			●			●		58x44x20	7.5
Toshiba 37WL56	2000	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Very solid LCD buy - and fine value, too	37	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●		●		66x91x11	24.9
ViewSonic N2750W	699	08.05/ST	★★★★☆	Keenly priced and extremely capable but no DVI/HDMI sockets.	27	16:9	1280x720			●	●	●	●	●	50x78x21	13
ViewSonic N3200W	1299	04.05/ST	★★★☆☆	Seductively priced and picture performance is acceptable.	32	16:9	1280x768	●	●	●	●	●	●		64x105x22	22.5

Projectors

Bring the cinema into your front room

BUDGET Up to £9500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Type	Aspect ratio	Max screen (in)	Throw ratio	Progressive PAL	Progressive NTSC	INPUTS: RGB Scart	Composite in	Component in	S-Video in	DVI-D	HDMI	Weight (kg)
BenQ PE5120	699	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	It's not perfect but it's well worth shortlisting.	DLP	16:9	300	1.64-2.37	●	●		●	●	●	●		3.0
BenQ PE8700	2699	04.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Doesn't quite catch the front runners.	DLP	16:9	300	n/a	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		14.8
Digital Projection iVision HD	6995	02.04/GT	★★★★★	Cracking - small fuss-free and a superb picture.	DLP	16:9	217	1.75-2.25	●	●		●	●	●	●		3
Epson EMP-TW500	2499	09.04/FT	★★★★☆	Fine in almost every way but doesn't rival DLPs.	LCD	16:9	300	1.85 - 2.69	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	6.2
Hitachi PJ-TX10	800	08.04/GT	★★★★☆	Competitively priced but now not cutting-edge.	LCD	16:9	300	1.0-1.15	●	●		●	●	●			3.5
Hitachi PJ-TX100	1000	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Excellent performance for an LCD design.	LCD	16:9	300	1.75-2.42	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		4.4
HP ep7122	1330	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Very capable but there are flaws and it's pricey.	DLP	4:3	290	-	●	●		●	●	●	●		5.7
Marantz VP-10S1	23000	12.04/FT	★★★★★	Amazing reference-quality image from this giant.	DLP	16:9	300	3 lens opt	●	●		●	●	●	●		41
NEC HT1100	3049	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Excellent, comes close to the class leaders.	DLP	16:9	300	1.7-2.0	●	●	●	●	●	●			3.2
Optoma H27	699	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Belies its price tag with a great performance.	DLP	16:9	241	1.87-2.25	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	2.5
Panasonic PT-AE700	1700	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	Very good, very quiet and very flexible.	LCD	16:9	200	1.2-7.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	3.6
Panasonic PT-LM2	699	06.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Decent but it won't set the world on fire.	LCD	4:3	300	1.74-1.81	●	●	●		●	●			1.6
Runco Reflection CL-510	5995	04.04/GT	★★★★★	Well worth the money if you can afford it.	DLP	16:9	200	1.75-2.00	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		10
Sagem MDP 1600	799	06.05/GT	★☆☆☆☆	Despite its price this is far from good value.	DLP	4:3	276	n/a				●		●			1.9
Sanyo PLV-Z3	1499	04.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Picture quality can't match its better rivals.	LCD	16:9	200	n/a	●	●		●	●	●		●	4.1
ScreenPlay 4800	800	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Impressive picture and specs for the price.	DLP	4:3	n/a	1.89-2.27	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	2.9
ScreenPlay 4805	999	08.05/GT	★★★★★	Best projector under £1500 in Awards 2004.	DLP	16:9	120	1.77-2.13	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	3.0
ScreenPlay 5700	2000	04.04/GT	★★★★★	Projector Product of the Year in Awards 2004.	DLP	16:9	n/a	1.89-2.63	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	4.2

ScreenPlay 5700

Our projector Product of the Year produces a picture that's comfortable in just about any company, offering top-quality performance at a super-competitive price - indeed, we awarded it five stars when it cost £800 more! Component and DVI-D inputs make the most of the magnificent widescreen pictures.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
PROJECTOR
SCREENPLAY 5700

ScreenPlay 7205	2999	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Best projector £3000-£5000 in Awards 2004.	DLP	16:9		1.67-2.08	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	4.3
ScreenPlay 7210	3999	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Brilliant - spectacular colour vitality and realism.	DLP	16:9	132	1.67-2.08	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	4.3

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

GLOSSARY
page 186

THE VITAL LINK

We reveal the secret behind building the ultimate home entertainment system – it's all about connections...

To make the perfect recipe, you need to have *all* the best ingredients. Whether you're wooing the missus with a slap-up meal or building a house to live in, if you skimp on the small bits that make the bigger picture, the end result will be a disappointment. This is especially true when you're putting together your home entertainment system.

So many people focus all their attention on the obvious hardware – speakers, amp and CD player – and forget the importance of the thing that holds it all together: the cable.

It doesn't matter how much you spend on the latest CD technology, or whether you've invested in the ultimate super-duper do-it-all DVD hard drive; if you're using cable that's not up to the task, your sound and picture quality will be compromised. Full stop.

Before we go any further, we should make one thing clear, however: cable is not a miracle cure for badly recorded material. Despite the fact some vendors will tell you how good interconnectors or cable can add quality to the original recording, this is nonsense; if it wasn't there in the first place, it never will be. What you *will* find, though, is that using the best cable you can buy will probably add a new dimension to music you've been listening to for years.

Take Atlas cables, for example. The Scottish manufacturer offers a huge range of interconnects and cables, which are all researched, developed and produced to the strictest specifications. The result: your favourite tunes sounding better than ever before.

It's this uncompromising approach to quality that has earned Atlas countless awards for excellence from experts all over the globe. But it's not just industry boffins who will tell you how good Atlas is. Take a trip to one of its approved dealers and you can see for yourself (see the list on the right).

Each appointed Atlas retailer is aware of the fine line between cables that cause listener irritation and fatigue, and those that enhance your experience. They will advise you about which interconnects and cables will work best with your system, and will also produce cables to match your exact specification. And contrary to popular opinion, the best ingredients don't always cost the earth; you can easily find the right Atlas equipment to match your budget.

Retailers

London & South East

Soundcraft Hi-Fi, Ashford (Kent)
01233 624441
www.soundcrafthifi.com

P.J. Hi-Fi Ltd, Guildford
01483 504801
www.pjhifi.co.uk

Harrow Audio, Harrow
020 8863 0938
www.harrowaudio.com

Bartletts Hi-Fi, London
020 7607 2148
www.bartlettshifi.com

Hi-Fi Experience, London
020 7580 3527
www.hifilondon.co.uk

Sound Seduction, Sevenoaks
01732 456573
www.soundseduction.co.uk

Phase 3 Hi-Fi, Worthing
01903 245577
www.phase3hifi.com

South West

Radfords, Bath
01225 446245
www.radfords.co.uk

Suttons Hi-Fi, Bournemouth
01202 555512
www.suttonshifi.co.uk

Movement Audio, Bournemouth
01202 529988
www.movement-audio.co.uk

Radfords, Bristol
0117 944 1010
www.radfords.co.uk

Movement Audio, Poole
01202 730865
www.movement-audio.co.uk

Salisbury Hi-Fi, Salisbury
01722 322169
www.salisburyhifi.co.uk

Phase 3 Hi-Fi, Southampton
02380 228434
www.phase3hifi.com

Weymouth Hi-Fi, Weymouth
01305 785729
www.weymouthhifi.co.uk

Central England

Overture, Banbury
01295 272158
www.overture.co.uk

Music Matters, Birmingham
0121 429 2811
Solihull
0121 742 0254
Stourbridge
01384 444184
Sutton Coldfield
0121 354 2311
www.musicmatters.co.uk

British Audio Products, Wilstead
01234 741152
www.britishaudio.co.uk

North England

A. Fanthorpe Ltd, Hull
01482 223096
www.fanthorpes.co.uk

Lintone Audio, Gateshead
0191 477 4167
www.lintone.co.uk

Lintone Audio, Gateshead (Metro)
0191 460 0999
www.lintone.co.uk

Moorgate Acoustics, Sheffield
0114 275 6048
www.morgateacoustics.co.uk

Scotland

Holburn Hi-Fi, Aberdeen
01224 585713
www.holburnhifi.co.uk

Glasgow Audio, Glasgow
0141 332 4707
www.glasgowaudio.com

For more information, visit: www.hifi.org.uk

Awards

Multiple accolades in the UK and abroad prove the quality of Atlas Cables. See the Buyer's Guide at the back of this magazine for confirmation.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★
Speaker Cable
Atlas Hyper 3.0 / Jun. 2005
Atlas Basic Biwire / Nov. 2004
Stereo Interconnect
Atlas Questor 1m / Nov. 2004

Editor's Choice
Jan 2005
Atlas Elektra All Cu PTFE

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION Best Buy 2003 HI-FI & HOME CINEMA AWARDS
HiFi Interconnects 2003
Atlas Equator

BEST BUY WHAT VIDEO
Component Video Cable
Atlas Element / May 2004

ATLAS | Cables

Projectors continued...

Bring the cinema into your front room

BUDGET Up to £9500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Type	Aspect ratio	Max screen (in)	Throw ratio	Progressive PAL	Progressive NTSC	INPUTS: RGB Scart	Composite in	Component in	S-Video in	DVI-D	HDMI	Weight (kg)
ScreenPlay 777	14000	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Amazing performer, a real 'statement' product.	DLP	16:9	180	7 lens opt	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	20.2
Sharp XV-Z10	795	08.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	Picture lags some way behind the competition.	LCD	16:9	300	1.38-1.72			●	●	●	●			2.7
Sharp XV-Z12000	6000	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Excellent performance in every regard.	DLP	16:9	300	1.8-2.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	9.4
Sharp XV-Z200	1999	04.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Easy to use but let down by performance.	DLP	16:9	n/a	1.97-2.36	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	4:3
Sharp XV-Z201	1999	Awd.04	★★★★☆	Convenient as projectors get – worth a look.	DLP	16:9	200	1.17-1.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	4.3
Sharp XV-Z91E	999	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Now even more tempting given the new price.	DLP	4:3	200	1.5-1.8	●	●	●	●	●	●			4.3
SIM2 Domino 20-H	2999	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Terrific performer but rivals cost less.	DLP	16:9	300	2.2-3.1	●	●		●	●	●		●	5.0
SIM2 Domino 30-H	4000	10.04/FT	★★★★★	Ice-cool looks belie its red-hot performance.	DLP	16:9	300	1.8-2.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	5.0
SIM2 HT 300 E	6000	04.05/FT	★★★★★	Terrific projector from Italy's finest - great image.	DLP	16:9	250	1.8-2.4	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	5.8
ThemeScene H30A	995	08.05/ST	★★★★★	Delivers a terrific picture for its modest price.	DLP	16:9	330	1.65-2.0	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	2.0
ThemeScene H57	1799	03.05/FT	★★★★★	High-quality widescreen at a very modest price.	DLP	16:9	246	1.6-1.8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	3.4
ThemeScene H77	3500	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Impressive specification for the price.	DLP	16:9	283	1.6-2.1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		7.5
Toshiba ET-1	899	02.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	The picture can't compete with that of rivals.	LCD	16:9	300	1.13-1.42	●	●	●	●	●	●			3.5
Toshiba MT200	999	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Good, solid offering but competition is strong.	DLP	16:9	290	1.87-2.25	●	●		●	●		●	●	3
Toshiba MT700	2500	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Diverting, but it's up against tough competition.	DLP	16:9	300	1.3-1.8	●	●			●	●		●	4.5
Vidikron Vision Model 40	5615	04.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Expensive for average picture quality.	DLP	16:9	200	1.38-1.63	●	●		●	●	●	●		6.7
ViewSonic PJ552	885	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	Offers a sharp picture in spite of LCD flaws.	LCD	4:3	300	1.5-1.8	●	●	●	●	●	●			6.3
Yamaha DPX-1100	8000	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Superb picture and considerable flexibility.	DLP	16:9	200	1.0-1.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	13.8
Yamaha LPX-510	3500	Awd.04	★★★★☆	User-friendly and would suit a small room.	LCD	16:9	300	1.35-2.03	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	4.8

Digital TV tuners

Add more channels to any existing television

BUDGET Up to £400

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Freeview/Sky	Recorder	RGB Scart out	RGB Scart in	Component out	Analogue out	Digital out	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Weight (kg)
Bush DFTA3	60	06.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Doesn't boast good enough picture performance or level of dependability to impress.	F		●	●				3x25x14	0.6
DigiFusion FVRT100	170	06.05/GT	★★★★★	Excellent value for money thanks to startling image quality and great features.	F	●	●	●				36x24x5	2.3
Goodmans GDB5	80	06.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Includes a DAB radio but the overall performance isn't up to the best.	F		●	●				9x40x30	2.2
Humax F2-FOX-T	80	06.05/GT	★★★★★	Combines impressive performance with a tidy and user-friendly design.	F		●	●		●	●	4x22x16	1.0
Humax PVR-8000T-80	169	01.05/FT	★★★☆☆	The original 40GB has a much better picture than its 80GB successor.	F	●	●	●		●		6x37x26	2.7
Inverto IDL7000T	240	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	Much to praise but the picture isn't quite good enough - includes an 80GB hard disk.	F	●	●	●	●	●	●	42x30x7	3.0
Netgem i-Player	130	01.04/GT	★★★★☆	Good value, offering Freeview, internet access and an extensive array of outputs.	F		●	●		●	●	5x31x16	0.7
Nokia 221T	130	01.04/GT	★★★★★	The innovative design looks different but the Nokia has competitive performance.	F		●	●		●	●	13x25x28	1.05
Pioneer DBR-TF100	100	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Fine performance with a few extra frills for an affordable price.	F		●	●			●	5x26x19	1.1
Sagem ITD66	80	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	Good pictures at a reasonable price mean this Sagem's definitely worth a look.	F		●	●		●	●	22x14x3.5	0.4
Sky Sky+	149	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Best subscription TV PVR in Awards 2004. Watch and record satellite television.	S	●	●	●		●		7x38x24	4.5
Sony VTX-D800	100	06.05/GT	★★★★★	Fantastic all-rounder, one of the best of its genre for both sound and vision.	F		●	●		●	●	22x5x24	1.5
Thomson DHD4000	200	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	Useful features and a solid performance make this digibox/hard disk worth a look.	F	●	●			●	●	5x36x23	2.5
Thomson DTI2300	80	06.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Digital tuner with a card slot for Top Up TV - can't deliver the highest quality.	F		●			●	●	4x25x15	0.7
Thomson DVT1100	200	01.04/GT	★★★★☆	The Thomson comes with a built-in DVD player, but separates are better value.	F		●	●		●	●	7x36x24	
Topfield TF5800PVR	299	09.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Great spec – twin tuners and 160GB hard-drive recorder – let down by poor picture.	F	●	●			●	●	6x34x27	4.2

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION
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RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

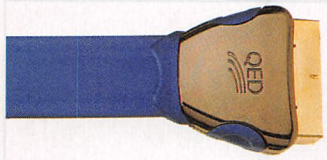
GLOSSARY
page 186

Video cables

Essential extras to maximise the quality of your DVD player and other sources

BUDGET Up to £210/m

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: S-Video	TYPE: Scart	TYPE: Component	TYPE: DVI-D	TYPE: HDMI	Length (m)	CONDUCTOR: Copper	CONDUCTOR: Silver	CONDUCTOR: Carbon	CONDUCTOR: Other	Directional	Add. cost £/m
Atlas Element	60	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Elegant cable and the image is rich and detail levels are high.			●			1.0	●					
Audioquest DV-1	270	07.04/GT	★★★★★	Extremely solid performer that presents an accurate and detailed image.				●		15	●					14
Audioquest G-Scart	57	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	The picture is fantastic and sound performance is great considering the price.		●				1.0	●				●	16
Audioquest HDMI-3	280	07.05/FT	★★★★★	The true value of this cable shines in use - it's pricey, but worth the outlay.					●	2.0	●	●				
Chord Co Component	99	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	Image quality is excellent: details are handled well and colours are natural.			●			1.0	●				●	10
Chord Co Scart	109	01.02/FT	★★★★★	Superb Scart for composite video and audio - RGB version should be even better.		●				1.0	●					16
Chord Co Scart (RGB)	129	04.02/GT	★★★★★	Pricey and only justifiable in a high-quality system, but worth the money anyway.		●				1.0	●				●	10
Chord Co Silver Plus (HDMI)	80	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Best digital video cable in Awards 2004. Great value for money.		●			●	1.5	●	●				
Chord Company Silver S-Video	60	05.02/FT	★★★★☆	One of the best S-Video cables around, but ensure the rest of your kit is up to it.	●	●				1.0	●	●			●	8
Ecosse HDMI	129	07.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Longer length, but it leaves traces of noise on-screen - good detail doesn't save it.					●	5.0	●					
Ecosse Prisma	40	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Flexible and easy to handle, colours and overall contrast are very good.			●			1.0	●					
Gefen CAB-HDMI	40	07.04/GT	★★★★☆	Fine performer which manages to present a vivid and entertaining picture.					●	3	●					
Ixos XFV05-300	30	07.04/GT	★★★☆☆	A cut above its other budget rivals but this DVI offering is only an average one.				●		3	●					5
Ixos XHT601-150	40	03.04/GT	★★★★★	A superb cable with great images, but we'd go for the Award-winning XHT611.		●				1.5	●					
Ixos XHT611-075	40	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy Awards 2003. Flat cable and sockets - brilliant picture and sound.		●				0.75	●					
Ixos XHV601	50	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Light years better than freebie Scarts, but it is not a class leader.		●				1.5	●					
Ixos XHV704-300	50	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	If you need a three-metre run this well-made cable is an affordable solution.			●			3.0	●					
Ixos XHV904-100	100	09.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Vivid colours but rather overdone - clarity and sharpness suffer.			●			1.0	●					Inc
Kimber HDMI	90	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Reproduction of colours is bright and vivid without ever being brash.					●	1.5	●	●				Inc
Kimber Scart RGB	102	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Premium-quality cable at a premium price, but it's a stunning performer.		●				0.75	●				●	92
Molex DVI-D	9.50	07.04/GT	★★★★☆	Cheap and cheerful, it offers decent performance. A fair starter buy, but no more.				●		2	●					
Monster DVI400	70	07.04/GT	★★★★★	Produces a terrifyingly good picture, with levels of detail and definition to die for.				●		1.0	●					
Monster HDMI400	130	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Overall performance is storming and it is a useful length.					●	4.0	●					
Monster M1000CV	160	04.02/GT	★★★★☆	Not a component cable for every system but worthwhile in the right context.			●			1.0	●				●	
Monster THX RGB Scart	120	07.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Delivers good quality pictures but it is too expensive.		●				2.0	●	●				
Monster THX Ultra Comp	100	09.05/FT	★★★★☆	Great cable - contrast levels are excellent and colours are endearing.			●			1.5		●				Inc
Nordost Optix Comp Video	175	04.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. If you've got the right kit it delivers the goods.			●			1.0	●	●			●	60
Nordost Silver Screen	220	03.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Absolutely top-class performer - but the heavyweight price tag severely limits it.		●				1	●	●			●	50
Philex 26481H	15	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Cheap, solidly made and the performance is spot on. A great first upgrade.		●				1.5	●				●	
Philex Thor RGB	50	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Picture and build quality that belies its price tag.			●			1.5	●				●	n/a
Philex Thor Scart	30	04.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Build and performance that belies its pricetag.		●				1.5	●					n/a
Profigold DVI PGM1415	190	07.05/FT	★★★★★	Industrial strength construction and great pictures with no noise - excellent value.				●		15	●					
Profigold PGV332	37	10.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Cheap, and a step up from a freebie cable, but not as good as some around.			●			1.5	●					
Profigold PGV335	33	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Really accomplished and fantastic-value - colour balance and detail is excellent.			●			5.0						
Profigold PGV632	31.50	05.02/GT	★★★★★	Performance at a modest price - lets you adapt your TVs scart sockets to suit.	●	●				1.5	●					
Profigold PGV7000	42.50	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Solidly constructed and capable, if not quite a front-runner in perfomance terms.		●				1.5	●					
Profigold PGV7392	26.50	05.04/FT	★★★★☆	A deft, natural way with colours and good sound from this affordable cable.		●				1.5	●					
Profigold PGV7393	31.50	09.01/FT	★★★☆☆	Uninspiring but a major step up from the freebie Scart slung in with your DVD.		●				1.0	●					
Profigold PGV782	32	04.02/GT	★★★★☆	Sensible upgrade - impressive with fast moving action films and colours shine.		●				1.5	●					
QED P2110	30	05.04/FT	★★★★★	Best Scart cable in Awards 2004. Worth every penny.		●				1.0	●				●	



QED P2110

QED has given its Scart range a bit of a rethink – with great success. The new cable is flatter, and has a face-on plug to ease both installation and connection respectively. Not only does it look the business but it also does the business where it's needed: on-screen. It's cheap, convenient and a stellar performer.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004
BEST SCART CABLE
QED P2110

QED Qunex P-CV1 Component	45	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Best component video cable in Awards 2004. Images full of life and detail.			●			1.0	●					n/a
QED Qunex SR-CV1 Component	85	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	Picture performance is brilliant and it's beautifully built, but it's a little pricey.			●			1.0	●					
QED QUNEX SVS	60	05.02/GT	★★★★☆	Delivers a fine performance, but not as vivid in brightness terms as some rivals.	●					1.0	●	●				
QED Signature 5	200	09.05/GT	★★★★★	It costs a lot of money but it fully justifies the expenditure.			●			1.0	●	●				
QED Sqart AV2110	50	03.04/GT	★★★★★	Convincing colours and excellent contrast make this the best Scart at the price.		●				1.0	●	●				
QED Sqart AV4110 (RGB)	50	09.01/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Video-only, the best picture quality in the test.		●				1.0	●				●	
Supra AV3 Component	65	10.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Exemplary colour realism and three-dimensionality.			●			1.0	●					11
Supra AV6 (RGB)	80	04.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Movies benefit from an impressive depth of field.		●				1.0	●			●	●	13
Supra FS Scart	38	11.04/GT	★★★★★	One of the best budget Scarts we've seen for years.		●				1.0	●					
Tech + Link XS141	40	07.05/FT	★★★★★	Lack of image noise is amazing, blacks are superbly defined - a high-value buy.			●			1.0	●					
Tech + Link XS810 Scart	50	05.05/FT	★★★★☆	Excellent detail, black definition and depth of field - just a bit pricey.		●				1.0	●	●				
True Col Ind Taipan S-Video	55	08.00/GT	★★★★★	Sensibly priced, capable cable, with outstanding contrast and depth levels.	●					1.0	●					20
True Col Ind Taipan Scart	90	08.00/GT	★★★★☆	Pricey, but offers sensational performance, with first-rate colour and detail.		●				1.0	●	●				50
TST TV1731	30	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Good step up from basic freebie cables, with smooth colours and edge definition.			●			1.5	●					
TST TV8810-5	27	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Beautifully made and offers a very reasonable level of performance for the price.		●				0.5	●					
van den Hul HDMI	50	07.05/FT	★★★★★	Nothing threw this cable off balance - use if you can get away with one-metre.					●	1.0	●	●				
Vivanco Prowire SHQ7712	40	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Well made and has decent-quality Scart plugs - fine performance for the money.		●				1.2	●				●	
Wireworld Ultraviolet 5 HDMI	130	07.04/GT	★★★★★	An exceptional cable that will add significantly to your viewing experience.				●	●	1.0	●	●			●	30

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

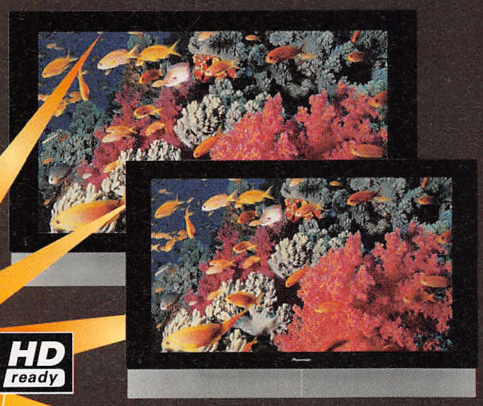
GLOSSARY
page 186

SEVENOAKS
SOUND & VISION

SUMMER EVENT
EXTENDED UNTIL 24TH SEPTEMBER 2005

ABERDEEN
BEDFORD
BIRMINGHAM
BRIGHTON
BRISTOL
BROMLEY
CAMBRIDGE
CARDIFF
CHELSEA
CHELTENHAM
CRAWLEY
CROYDON
EALING
EDINBURGH
EPSOM
EXETER
GLASGOW
GUILDFORD
HOLBORN
HULL
IPSWICH
KINGSTON
LEICESTER
LEEDS
LINCOLN
MAIDSTONE
MANCHESTER
NEWCASTLE
NORWICH
NOTTINGHAM
OXFORD
PETERBOROUGH
PLYMOUTH
POOLE
PRESTON
READING
SEVENOAKS
SHEFFIELD
SOLIHULL
SOUTHAMPTON
SOUTHGATE
STAINES
SWINDON
SWISS COTTAGE
TUNBRIDGE WELLS
WATFORD
WEYBRIDGE
WITHAM (ESSEX)
WOLVERHAMPTON
YEOVIL (OPENING SOON)

49 STORES NATIONWIDE



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PDP435XDE
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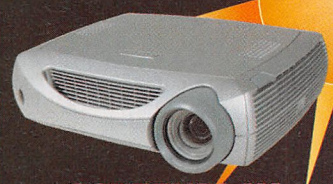

SCREENPLAY
SP5700 DLP Projector
£1499 SAVE £500

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INCLUDES 3 YEAR GOLD PLUS WARRANTY
(NICWA00)*

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Quake	£299	SAVE £50
Stampede	£499	SAVE £50
Strata 5	£624	SAVE £75

ALL MODELS BRITTEX BLACK FINISH ONLY
(NICWA00)*

DENON
DVD3910 DVD Player
£719 SAVE £30
AVR3805 AV Receiver
£799 SAVE £50

(NICWA00)*

MONITOR AUDIO
Bronze B2 Speakers
£179 SAVE £20
(NICWA00)*

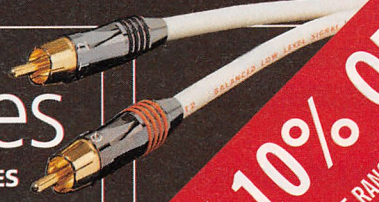
Free QED Cables

CLAIM FREE QED SPEAKER OR INTERCONNECT CABLES WORTH AT LEAST £50

WHEN YOU PURCHASE SELECTED SPEAKERS OR CD/AMPLIFIER COMBINATIONS

Ask in-store for details. (NICWA00)*

QED



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***Added Value Offers - From range available in-store.**
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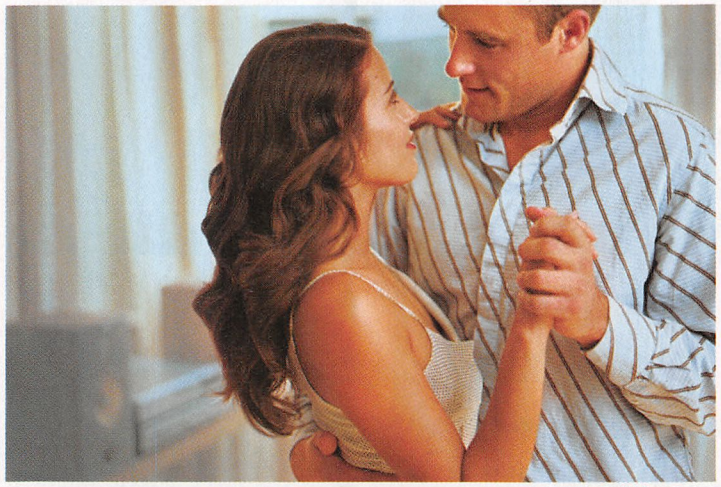
Advert valid until at least 24/09/2005, E&OE.

SEVENOAKS
SOUND & VISION



Specialist hi-fi

Contemporary hi-fi is constantly setting new standards in sound reproduction and design. Whatever you listen to, be it Robbie Williams or Rachmaninov, Sevenoaks can recommend separate components that will bring your music collection to life and complement your home. We're enthusiasts and experts, passionate about helping you build (or upgrade) a system that will delight for years to come.

FREE QED CABLE WITH SELECTED PRODUCTS ASK IN-STORE FOR DETAILS (NICWAOO)*

Rotel

Rotel is truly unique: a family-owned, specialist Japanese company whose passionate interest in music led them to manufacture audio components of uncompromised quality.

The **02 Series** is Rotel's entry-level range. The RCD-02 CD player combined with either an RA-01, RA-02 or RA-03 integrated amplifier represents true audiophile performance at an affordable price. For increased high-end performance, the RC-03/RB-3 pre/power amplifiers are available. The RT-02 tuner completes the range.

02 SERIES
RA-01 AMPLIFIER
RA-02 AMPLIFIER
RA-03 AMPLIFIER
RCD-02 CD PLAYER
RT-02 TUNER

10 SERIES
RA-1062 AMPLIFIER
RCD-1072 CD PLAYER

ROTEL RA-03 INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER
"The Rotel is simply the best-sounding amp here, and one of the cheapest - if you're after an amp, you must hear it."

Arcam

Arcam has spent more than a generation building some of the finest high-fidelity products the world has ever seen. Whether you're interested in two-channel or a complete multi-channel AV system, the Arcam DiVA series offers the music and movie lover the most complete range of high-performance home entertainment solutions from any specialist manufacturer.

FREE QED CABLE WITH SELECTED PRODUCTS ASK IN-STORE FOR DETAILS (NICWAOO)*

NEW ARCAM SOLO ALL-IN-ONE MUSIC SYSTEM

SOLO: A sleek, easy-to-operate system. Featuring an audiophile CD player, a 50 WPC amplifier combined with a DAB digital radio and a high quality FM tuner, the SOLO music system will captivate all who listen.

DIVA SERIES INCLUDES
A65 PLUS AMPLIFIER
A80 AMPLIFIER
A90 AMPLIFIER
CD73T CD PLAYER
CD192 CD PLAYER
T61 TUNER
DT91 DAB TUNER
DV78 DVD PLAYER
DV79 DVD PLAYER
AVR250 A/V RECEIVER
AVR300 A/V RECEIVER

Project

Project is currently one of the world's leading suppliers of turntables, with a range of models designed to satisfy all levels of expectation and budget. The range is simple to use, maintenance free and will function for a lifetime.

DEBUT III TURNTABLE WITH OM5E CARTRIDGE
2 XPERIENCE TURNTABLE (PICTURED RIGHT)

Cyrus

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If you've enjoyed listening to music before, try listening to it through a Cyrus system. With every product tuned by ear, Cyrus represents a quality of sound, which is rare at any price. Invest in a Cyrus system and you'll be rewarded with a wealth of sound you wouldn't have thought possible.

RANGE INCLUDES
CD6 & CD8X CD PLAYERS
6VS & 8VS AMPLIFIERS **PRE X VS** PREAMPLIFIER
DAC-X DAC & **FM X** TUNER

LINKSERVER SOLO
A Cyrus CD Player with built in 80Gb hard disk drive. Keep all your favourite music instantly accessible in a single, easy to operate component.

B&W

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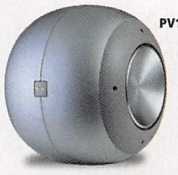
Since the outset, the focus of Bowers and Wilkins Loudspeakers has always been to offer the best possible musical experience. With a combination of the latest R&D techniques and a passion for music, B&W produces a diverse range of products befitting the largest audio manufacturer in the UK.

600 SERIES INCLUDES
DM601 S3 & **DM602 S3**
700 SERIES INCLUDES
705 & **703**
FPM SERIES INCLUDES
PV1 SUBWOOFER



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The right accessories can make or break your system.
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Spread the cost of buying.
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*Added Value Offers - From range available in-store. Not in conjunction with any other offer (NICWAOO)

ADVERT VALID UNTIL AT LEAST 24/09/2005, E&OE.

At least **10% off our normal selling prices** on a wide range of products. For our latest prices call your local store or visit www.ssav.com

SUMMER EVENT

EXTENDED UNTIL 24TH SEPTEMBER 2005

Roksan

Roksan designs and manufactures some of the most acclaimed hi-fi equipment currently available. All Roksan products are carefully evaluated by experienced engineers at every stage of the design process with the emphasis on performance and build quality.

Kandy
KA1 MKIII AMPLIFIER
KD1 MKIII CD PLAYER

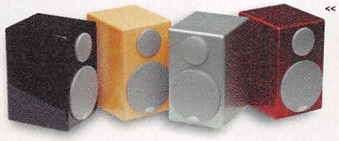
Caspian M SERIES
CD PLAYER
AMPLIFIER
PREAMPLIFIER
STEREO POWER
MONOBLOC POWER

FREE QED CABLE WITH SELECTED PRODUCTS ASK IN-STORE FOR DETAILS (NICWAOO)*

Monitor Audio

Since 1972 Monitor Audio has been developing and perfecting the implementation of metal drivers, innovative crossovers, and exemplary speaker cabinet construction and finish to further the ideal of achieving sound which is to the original "as close as it gets".

The range includes - Gold, New Silver RS, Bronze and Radius, a seriously compact system bringing true hi-fi performance to both music and movies at home.



<< RADIUS

MODELS INCLUDE
BRONZE B2, B2 AV, B4 AV
SILVER RS1, RS6, RS8
GOLD REFERENCE 10 & 60

NEW
SILVER RS6

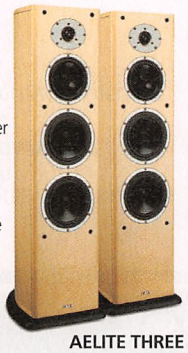
FREE QED CABLE WITH SELECTED PRODUCTS ASK IN-STORE FOR DETAILS (NICWAOO)*

<< **BRONZE B2**

"Monitor Audio's Bronze B2s sound much more expensive than their £200 price tag would suggest. In fact, they sound superb... In the competitive world of budget hi-fi, speakers don't get much better than the B2s."

Acoustic Energy

Established in 1987, Acoustic Energy is one of Britain's premier loudspeaker manufacturers offering one of the most targeted range of hi-fi and home cinema loudspeaker systems on the market today.



AELITE THREE

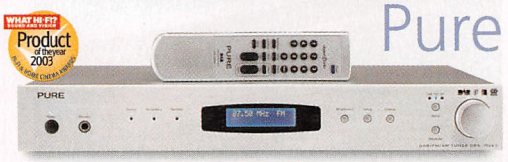
"The legendary AE1 lives on in this groundbreaking new version... It sets a new standard for small speakers."

Digital Radio
Harman Kardon

TU970 DAB/ANALOGUE TUNER

With Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) capability, this high-quality tuner delivers more stations and offers pure, distortion-free, CD-like sound, while providing useful radio and data services.

Pure



DRX702ES DAB/ANALOGUE TUNER

Wharfedale

DIAMOND 9.1 SPEAKERS

"The overall balance of the speakers is their finest characteristic. Thanks to near-perfect driver integration, music sounds wonderfully natural and transparent. This is a bar-raising effort from Wharfedale: these are ridiculously good speakers at the budget price level." digital technologies from one of the oldest hi-fi names.

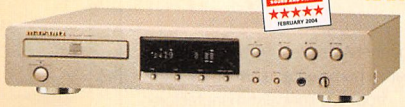
Free QED Cables

FREE QED SPEAKER CABLE worth at least £50 when you purchase selected Speakers over £200.
Ask in-store for details. (NICWAOO)*

FREE QED INTERCONNECT CABLE worth at least £50 when you purchase selected CD and Amplifier combinations.
Ask in-store for details. (NICWAOO)*

Marantz

The Marantz 'Range Series' offers flexible system building options for every lifestyle.



RANGE SERIES INCLUDES
CD5400 CD PLAYER
PM4400 AMPLIFIER
PM7200 AMPLIFIER
ST4000 TUNER
SR4500 A/V RECEIVER
SR5500 A/V RECEIVER
DV4500 DVD PLAYER

CD5400 "This is a remarkable CD player for the money, with superb sound, looks and feel - A very solid buy and a lot of fun."

KEF Q Series

The Latest evolution of the acclaimed Q Series demonstrates how the benefits of KEF technology cascade down from the Reference Series to more affordable ranges. New Q features all the inherent advantages of KEF UNI-Q® technology and are available in a variety of Finishes.

FREE QED CABLE WITH SELECTED PRODUCTS ASK IN-STORE FOR DETAILS (NICWAOO)*

Q SERIES INCLUDES
Q COMPACT BOOKSHELF SPEAKERS
Q4 FLOORSTANDING SPEAKERS
Q7 AV SPEAKER PACKAGE

Quad

Founded in 1938, Quad's history is one of audio excellence. Today's range includes both electronics and speaker systems.

PRODUCTS INCLUDE
99 CD-PREAMPLIFIER
11L SPEAKERS

FREE QED CABLE WITH SELECTED PRODUCTS ASK IN-STORE FOR DETAILS (NICWAOO)*

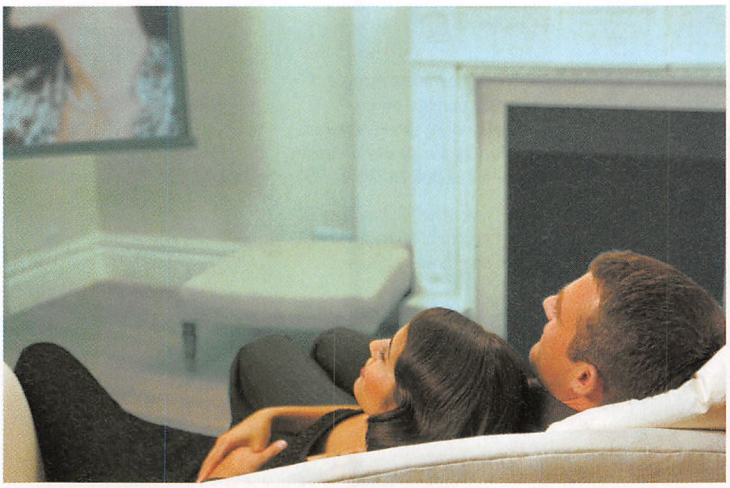
Musical Fidelity

Musical Fidelity's X-Series combines exceptional build quality with value for money.

X SERIES **X-80 & X150** AMPLIFIER
X-RAY^{V3} CD PLAYER
A5 SERIES **A5** AMPLIFIER & CD PLAYER

FREE QED CABLE WITH SELECTED PRODUCTS ASK IN-STORE FOR DETAILS (NICWAOO)*

SEVENOAKS
SOUND & VISION



Specialist home cinema

The recent growth of DVD has led to a huge rise in demand for home cinema equipment. The prices of DVD players, AV receivers, projectors and plasma screens continue to fall but, with so many options, it's not easy to know which ones will suit your needs. Indeed, in the face of this quickly evolving and often bemusing array of products, we aim to assist you in assembling a home cinema system to be proud of – one that achieves outstanding picture and sound quality.

DENON DVD-A1XV "An astonishing piece of kit that has no equals. Prepare to be astounded."
HOME CINEMA CHOICE • AWARDS 2005

Denon

Denon, Japan's oldest audio company, has established an enviable reputation for the performance of both its hi-fi and home cinema products, winning numerous awards and accolades over the years. Its stylish systems have succeeded in becoming the benchmark by which all other are judged.

MODELS INCLUDE
A/V RECEIVERS
AVR-1905 • AVR-2105 • AVR-2805 • AVR-3805
A/V AMPLIFIER AVC-A1XV
DVD PLAYERS DVD-1710 • DVD-1910
UNIVERSAL DVD PLAYERS
DVD-2910 • DVD-3910 • DVD-A11 • DVD-A1XV
DVD SYSTEMS
DHT-500SD • DHT-550SD

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004 BEST MULTICHANNEL RECEIVER £500-£750 Denon AVR-2805

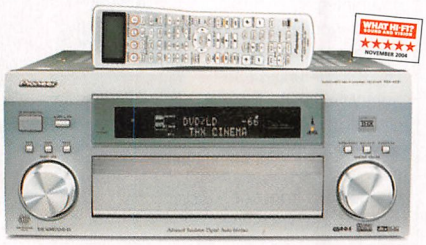
AVR-2805 "Last year's Award-winning AVR-2803 finally meets its match in the shape of this storming successor from Denon."

DHT-500SD
"The Denon DHT-500SD is the best home cinema system you can find in one box. If you're not confident that separates are the answer for you - too complex or too expensive - then the Denon provides the ideal solution."

Pioneer

MODELS INCLUDE
A/V AMPLIFIER VSA-AX10Ai
A/V RECEIVERS VSX-D814 • VSX-2014i • VSX-AX5Ai
UNIVERSAL DVD PLAYERS DV668Av • DV868Avi

DV-575A "For outstanding all-round ability there are few players that can match Pioneer's DV-575A."



VSX-AX5Ai Tweaked version of the Award-winning VSX-AX5i with additional sound-processing modes.

Yamaha

Yamaha is recognised as a world leader in the fields of musical instruments and audio equipment, and in more recent years, home cinema. New models for 2005 include upgraded A/V receivers, amplifers, and DVD players plus the innovative YSP-1 virtual surround speaker (pictured right).

MODELS INCLUDE
A/V AMPLIFIERS
DSP-AX757SE & DSP-Z9
A/V RECEIVERS
RX-V557 & RX-V1500
DVD PLAYERS
DVD-S557 & DVD-S1500

NEW YSP-1 Digital Sound Projector

Arcam

FREE QED CABLE WITH SELECTED PRODUCTS ASK IN-STORE FOR DETAILS (NICWAOO)†

Whether you're interested in two-channel or a complete multi-channel AV system, Arcam offers the music and movie lover the most complete range of high-performance home entertainment solutions from any specialist manufacturer.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004 BEST MULTICHANNEL RECEIVER £750-£1000 Arcam AVR250
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004 BEST DVD PLAYER £750-£1000 Arcam DV79

DVD PLAYERS DV78, DV79
FMJ DV29
A/V RECEIVERS AVR250, AVR300
A/V PRE/PROCESSOR AV8, AVP700
MULTICHANNEL POWER
P7, P1000

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At least **10% off our normal selling prices** on a wide range of products. For our latest prices call your local store or visit www.ssav.com

£ PRICING POLICY

We always try to ensure our prices are highly competitive.
In the event you can find the same products and excellent service at a lower price, please bring it to our store managers' attention.

ESSENTIAL ACCESSORIES

The right accessories can make or break your system.
Our carefully selected range, including QED, Soundstyle and Grado, will ensure you get the very best performance from your system.

0% FINANCE OPTION†

Spread the cost of buying.
0% finance option† is available on the majority of products we stock.
†Written details on request. Licensed credit brokers. Minimum balance £400. Subject to status.

PLEASE NOTE

Some products/brands are not available at all stores. Please call to confirm or see the brand locator on our website before travelling.
*Added Value Offers - From range available in-store. Not in conjunction with any other offer (NICWAOO)
ADVERT VALID UNTIL AT LEAST 24/09/2005, E&OE.

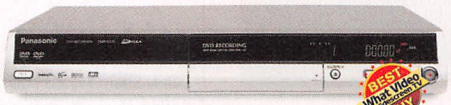
DVD Recorders

Although making digital recordings of TV broadcasts isn't new, the choice, versatility and quality of recorders keep getting better. Our product selection includes both DVD only recorders and hybrid DVD/hard-disk models.

Panasonic

DVD RECORDERS
NEW DMR-ES10 (MULTI-FORMAT)

HARD-DISK MODELS (HDD)
NEW DMR-EH50 80GB (MULTI-FORMAT) • DMR-E500 400GB



Pioneer

DVD RECORDERS (DVD-RW)
DVR-220 • DVD-320

HARD-DISK MODELS (HDD/DVD-RW)
DVR-420H 80GB • DVR-520H 80GB
DVR-720H 160GB • DVR-920H 250GB

"In all, the Pioneer DVR-720H is a fine machine with some nifty features and superb performance... Superb."
WHAT VIDEO AND WIDESCREEN TV • AUGUST 2004

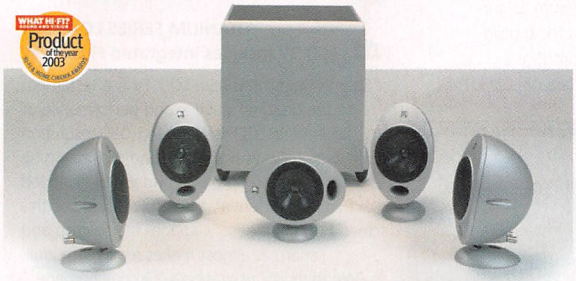
REL Subwoofers

In a market packed with subwoofers claiming to deliver the ultimate bass experience, only one brand of sub-bass system can prove its supremacy. With a record of review success stretching back over a decade and featuring no fewer than nine of the coveted What Hi-Fi? Awards, REL is acknowledged as the leading provider of deep, clean bass frequencies.

"A flawless performance from the REL Stampede leaves little room for criticism."

Q SERIES
Quake • Q150E • Q201E • Q400E
ST SERIES
Stampede • Strata 5 • Storm 5

KEF KHT



The Kef Home Theatre (KHT) series brings audiophile sound quality to affordable home entertainment – it's been breaking new ground ever since it was first introduced. As its many awards and 5-star ratings prove, the original outperformed every conventional system in its class.

MODELS INCLUDE
KHT1005 • KHT2005.2
KHT5005 • KHT9000ACE

KHT2005.2 "KEF has done it. This is the new best system in its class... The KHT2005.2 is the new top surround dog. KEF should be very proud."

KEF KIT100
Home Cinema System

"Why take five speakers into the living room when you can use just two? Creating a virtual surround sound experience has never been simpler or more effective, thanks to this two speakers plus subwoofer concoction from KEF."

Acoustic Energy

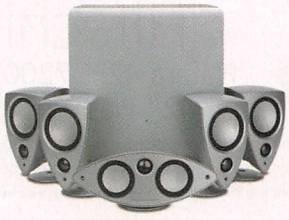
Established in 1987, Acoustic Energy is one of Britain's premier loudspeaker manufacturers offering arguably the most targeted range of hi-fi and home cinema loudspeaker systems on the market today.

The multi-award winning AEGIS EVO Series is a budget separates range for hi-fi and home cinema enthusiasts alike, offering exquisite transparency, detail and clarity, coupled with awesome bass and dynamics.

AEGIS EVO SERIES INCLUDES
EVO One • EVO Three • EVO Centre & Sub
AELITE SERIES INCLUDES
Aelite Two • Aelite Three • Aelite Centre & Sub

Mordaunt Short
Genie

"Distinctive looks, practical to use, first-class sonics from the sats and the sub - it adds up to a winning cinema set-up... For seamless integration of sound, impressive integrity of build and all-round covetability, the Mordaunt-Short Genie package is hard to beat - and it looks rather splendid, too."



Mission
Elegante e82

"Performance with style - If you're looking for a speaker package without sonic sacrifices, then look no further than the Elegantes."

Elegante
Colour Options Available

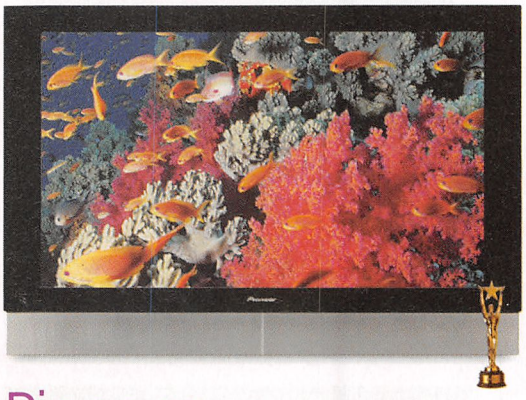
FREE QED CABLE WITH SELECTED PRODUCTS ASK IN-STORE FOR DETAILS (INCVAT)

M-Cube

"Mission has shaken up this market with an innovative, desireable product of rare ability - audition today."

SEVENOAKS
SOUND & VISION

Plasma & LCD



Pioneer launches its fifth-generation, high-definition plasma televisions. Featuring up to seven billion colours, this extended line-up of products are equipped with new proprietary technologies, have unprecedented advancements in picture and sound quality and are noticeably thinner and lighter than Pioneer's previous models.

Pioneer PDP-435XDE Plasma TV

"If you've been holding out for a plasma screen which is ready for the next generation of TV broadcasting, then look no further." HOME CINEMA CHOICE • AWARDS 2005

Panasonic Viera

There seems little doubt that the future of television is flat, and the future of flat is the award-winning VIERA range from the world leaders in screen technology, Panasonic. The VIERA range consists of both LCD and Plasma televisions. New additions to the range include 37, 42 & 50in **PV500** models with support for both high-definition and MPEG-4 recording.

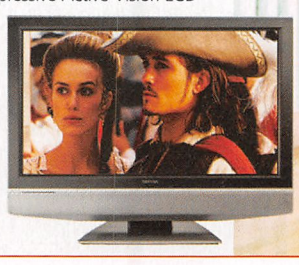
MODELS INCLUDE
TX26LXD500 26"
TX32LXD500 32"
TH37PE50 37"
TH42PV500 42"
TH50PV500 50"

FREEVIEW channel and service subject to coverage. Aerial upgrade may be required. **NB** - Cabinet Stand/Pedestal Stand are available at additional cost.

Toshiba Stasia

32WL56 LCD TV

Boasting HDMI connectivity, this new model also features Toshiba's impressive Active Vision LCD picture processing technology, whereby detail is improved by increasing the pixel count of the screen by three times that of a conventional LCD TV.



Specialist home cinema

At the heart of any home cinema is its screen: Sevenoaks Sound & Vision can put you in the picture with a selection of flat-panel displays and projection systems. LCD and plasma screens are just a few centimetres thick and come in sizes from a 13inch portable to over 60inches. If you'd prefer to measure your screen-size in feet, how about one of the new generation of projectors? The latest designs are delivering superb results at increasingly affordable prices - and they're more home friendly than previous projectors, too.

Sharp Aquos

Only Sharp Aquos LCD TV offers so much perfection. With supreme styling, the appeal of the Aquos range is obvious. The Titanium Series combines Sharp's sixth-generation LCD panel with stunning, angular-styling, titanium colour-finish and superb build quality to produce a premium class of LCD idTVs

TITANIUM SERIES LC-45GD1
LCD TV Includes integrated FREEVIEW

"Sharp's mammoth 45in LCD TV is a testament to the growing viability and performance of large-scale LCD. Its 1,920 x1,080 resolution panel allows high-definition pictures to be viewed without compromise and when exploited to its full potential, the results could see this screen hung in a gallery. Images are so crisp and sharp, it almost makes reality look dull. We think it's inspirational. Go pay homage."

HOME CINEMA CHOICE • AWARDS 2005

FREEVIEW channel and service subject to coverage. Aerial upgrade may be required.

GA5 SERIES
LC26GA5 • LC-32GA5 • LC-37GA5

TITANIUM SERIES (FREEVIEW)
LC-32GD1E • LC-37GD1 • LC45GD1

Hitachi

Platara 42PD7200
42" Plasma TV

"Alright, we admit it, we rather like this screen. In fact, it's very difficult to find a reason why anyone hankering for a 42in plasma shouldn't go out and buy one. Five stars for Hitachi and a new standard for affordable excellence for everyone else." WHAT VIDEO • ISSUE 294

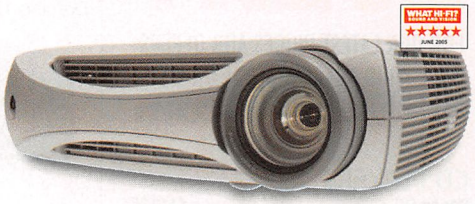
DLP Projectors

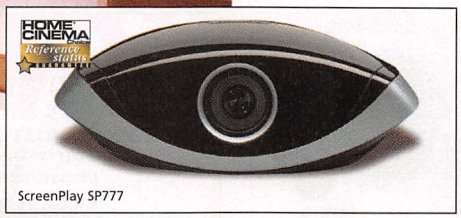
ScreenPlay

From the worldwide leader in digital projection technology and solutions, InFocus® ScreenPlay® DLP™ projectors are changing the face of home cinema offering market-beating performance, specification and value at every price point.

SP7210

"The new projector's picture is just phenomenal... It's clear that this is a great projector at a bargain price. Looks like ScreenPlay's sucess story is set to continue."

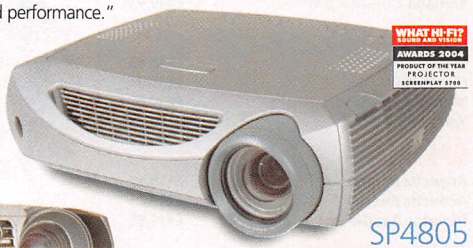


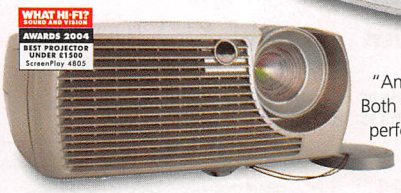


ScreenPlay SP777

SP5700

"This is one of the finest projectors on the market for both value and performance."



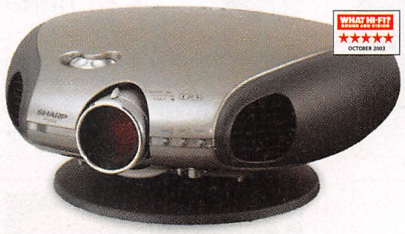


SP4805

"Another stunning success from ScreenPlay. Both the 4805's DLP specification and picture performance suggest a far pricier projector - there's never been a better time to take the big-screen plunge."

Sharp

From the entry level XV-Z91 to the state of the art XV-Z12000, Sharp delivers DLP technology in a range of projectors specifically designed for Home Cinema.



XV-Z91E

"This simple, light weight model is a well equipped DLP design and is a very tempting projector given the price. If you want a simple-to-use projector, it's well worth auditioning."

XV-Z200/201

Packed with features, Sharp's XV-200/201 includes the 'Matterhorn' DLP chip that can display images at a resolution of 1024 x 576 pixels plus whisper quiet (30db) operation.

Sim 2

RANGE INCLUDES
Domino 18 DLP
Domino 20-H & 30-H HDMI DLP
HT300E DLP & HT500 Link DLP

HT300E

"Spectacular, in a word. The Sim2's picture quality is terrific. especially if you make use of the HDMI input and provide your projector with a 'scaled' 720p video signal... Another terrific projector from Italy's finest."

ThemeScene

H77

ThemeScene's H77 projector boasts an awesome-sounding contrast ratio of 3500:1 and features Texas Instruments' very latest HD2+ DLP chipset that gives greater brightness and deeper black levels.

H30A

"There are so many good points it's hard to know where to start... Just how much better can budget DLP projectors get?!"

WHAT VIDEO & WIDESCREEN TV • ISSUE 292

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£ PRICING POLICY

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*Written details on request. Licensed credit brokers. Minimum balance £400. Subject to status.

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ADVERT VALID UNTIL AT LEAST 24/09/2005, E&OE.

SEVENOAKS
SOUND & VISION

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www.ssav.com

CD PLAYERS
Denon DCD485 ..... **£119.95**
Marantz CD5400 ..... **£119.95**

CD RECORDERS
Yamaha CDR-HD1500 ..... **£449.95**

AMPLIFIERS
Denon PMA355 ..... **£159.95**
Marantz PM4400 ..... **£139.95**
Marantz PM7200 ..... **£239.95**
Yamaha AX396 ..... **£169.95**

SPEAKERS
Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo One **£119.95**
Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo Three **£229.95**
Monitor Aaudio Bronze B2 ..... **£179.95**

DVD PLAYERS
Denon DVD-2910 Universal (Multi Region) ... **£499.95**
Denon DVD-3910 Universal (Multi Region) ... **£719.95**

A/V AMPLIFIERS RECEIVERS & PROCESSORS
Denon AVR1705 A/V Receiver **£199.95**
Denon AVR1905 A/V Receiver **£229.95**
Denon AVR2805 A/V Receiver **£549.95**
Denon AVR3805 A/V Receiver **£799.95**
Pioneer VSX-1014s A/V Receiver **£399.95**
Pioneer VSX-2014i A/V Receiver **£499.95**
Pioneer VSX-AX5Ai A/V Receiver **£749.95**
Pioneer VSA-AX10Ai A/V Amplifier ... **£1799.95**
Yamaha DSP-AX757SE A/V Amplifier ... **£399.95**
Yamaha RX-V357 A/V Receiver **£149.95**
Yamaha RX-V557 A/V Receiver **£299.95**

A/V SPEAKERS & PACKAGES
Acoustic Energy Evo 3B **£679.95**
KEF KHT1005 ..... **£299.95**

SUBWOOFERS
REL Quake (Brittex Black) **£299.95**
REL Stampede (Brittex Black) **£499.95**
REL Strata 5 (Brittex Black) **£624.95**

PLASMA
Panasonic TH37PV500 (Wal) 37" ... **£1999.95**
Panasonic TH42PV500 (Wal) 42" ... **£2299.95**
Pioneer PDP435XDE 43" (Ex Display) . **£2199.95**
Pioneer PDP435XDE 43" .....FROM **£2399.95**
Pioneer PDP505XDE 50" (Ex Display) . **£3299.95**
Pioneer PDP505XDE 50" .....FROM **£3599.95**

LCD TV
LG RZ32LZ50 32" **£999.95**
Sharp Aquos LC32GA5 32" **£899.95**

PROJECTORS
ScreenPlay SP5700 (Factory Refurbished) . **£1499.95**
ScreenPlay SP7205 (New Lower Price) .... **£ CALL**
ScreenPlay SP7210 (New Lower Price) .... **£ CALL**

Sim2 DLP Projectors
HT300 E-Link
£7999 SAVE £3000
HT300 E-volution
£5999 SAVE £2000
Domino 18 **£1999 SAVE £300**

(NICWAOO)*

Monitor Audio
GR10 Speakers
£599 SAVE £200
(NICWAOO)*

Free QED Cables

CLAIM FREE QED SPEAKER OR INTERCONNECT CABLES WORTH AT LEAST £50

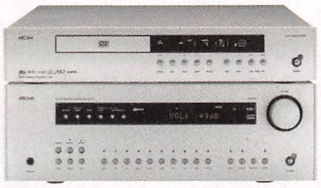
WHEN YOU PURCHASE SELECTED SPEAKERS OR CD/AMPLIFIER COMBINATIONS

Ask in-store for details. (NICWAOO)*

KEF KHT2005.2
5.1 Speaker Package
£599 CLAIM FREE
KEF SPEAKER STANDS WORTH £80
(NICWAOO)*

Roksan Kandy
MKIII CD & Amplifier
£999 CLAIM FREE
QED CABLE WORTH £100
(NICWAOO)*

Arcam Solo / Alto
Hi-Fi System
£1399 CLAIM FREE
QED CABLE WORTH £100
(NICWAOO)*



Arcam DiVA
DV79 DVD Player
AVR300 AV Receiver
£2299 CLAIM £400
TOWARDS THE SPEAKERS OF YOUR CHOICE
(NICWAOO)*

Denon
DHT-500SD
5.1 DVD System
£429 SAVE £20

(NICWAOO)*

Yamaha
YSP-1
Sound Projector Speaker System
£799 CLAIM FREE
QED INTERCONNECT CABLE WORTH £80
(NICWAOO)*

KEF KIT100
Home Cinema System
£999 SAVE £200
WHEN PURCHASED WITH ANY PLASMA OR LCD TV OVER £2000

(NICWAOO)*

Pure Digital
DRX-702ES
DAB/Analogue Tuner
£219 SAVE £30

(NICWAOO)*

Toshiba 32WL56
32" LCD HD Ready TV
£999 SAVE £50
(NICWAOO)*

***NICWAOO - NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR PROMOTION**

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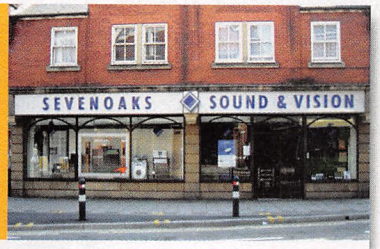
Spread the cost of buying.
0% finance option† is available on the majority of products we stock.
†Written details on request. Licensed credit brokers. Minimum balance £400. Subject to status.

PLEASE NOTE
Some products/brands are not available at all stores. Please call to confirm or see the brand locator on our website before travelling.
*Added Value Offers - From range available in-store. Not in conjunction with any other offer (NICWAOO)
ADVERT VALID UNTIL AT LEAST 24/09/2005, E&OE.

At least **10% off our normal selling prices** on a wide range of products. For our latest prices call your local store or visit www.ssav.com

SUMMER EVENT
EXTENDED UNTIL 24TH SEPTEMBER 2005

Nationwide Store guide



ABERDEEN 01224 252797
• 57 CROWN STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*

BEDFORD 01234 272779
• 29-31 ST PETERS STREET

BIRMINGHAM 0121 233 2977
• ARCH 12, LIVERY STREET

BRIGHTON 01273 733338
• 57 WESTERN ROAD, HOVE

BRISTOL 0117 974 3727
• 92B WHITELADIES ROAD, CLIFTON

BROMLEY 020 8290 1988
• 39A EAST STREET

CAMBRIDGE 01223 304770
• 17 BURLEIGH STREET

CARDIFF 029 2047 2899
• 104-106 ALBANY ROAD

CHELSEA 020 7352 9466
• 403 KINGS ROAD

CHELTENHAM 01242 241171
• 14 PITTVILLE STREET

CRAWLEY 01293 510777
• 32 THE BOULEVARD *OPEN SUNDAY*

CROYDON 020 8665 1203
• 369-373 LONDON ROAD

EALING 020 8579 8777
• 24 THE GREEN *OPEN SUNDAY*

EDINBURGH 0131 229 7267
• 5 THE GRASSMARKET

EPSOM 01372 720720
• 12 UPPER HIGH STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*

EXETER 01392 218895
• 28 COWICK STREET

GLASGOW 0141 332 9655
• 88 GREAT WESTERN ROAD

GUILDFORD 01483 536666
• 73B NORTH STREET

HOLBORN 020 7837 7540
• 144-148 GRAYS INN ROAD

HULL 01482 587171
• 1 SAVILE ROW, SAVILE STREET

IPSWICH 01473 286977
• 12-14 DOGS HEAD STREET

KINGSTON 020 8547 0717
• 43 FIFE ROAD *OPEN SUNDAY*

LEEDS 0113 245 2775
• 62 NORTH STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*

LEICESTER 0116 253 6567
• 10 LOSEBY LANE

LINCOLN 01522 527397
• 20-22 CORPORATION STREET *(OFF HIGH STREET)*

MAIDSTONE 01622 686366
• 96 WEEK STREET

MANCHESTER 0161 831 7969
• 69 HIGH ST, CITY CENTRE

NEWCASTLE 0191 221 2320
• 19 NEWGATE STREET

NORWICH 01603 767605
• 29-29A ST GILES STREET

NOTTINGHAM 0115 911 2121
• 597-599 MANSFIELD ROAD

OXFORD 01865 241773
• 41 ST CLEMENTS STREET

PETERBOROUGH 01733 897697
• 36-38 PARK ROAD

PLYMOUTH 01752 226011
• 107 CORNWALL STREET

POOLE 01202 671677
• LATIMER HOUSE, 44-46 HIGH STREET

PRESTON 01772 825777
• 40-41 LUNE STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*

READING 0118 959 7768
• 3-4 KINGS WALK SHOPPING CENTRE

SEVENOAKS 01732 459555
• 109-113 LONDON ROAD

SHEFFIELD 0114 255 5861
• 635 QUEENS ROAD, HEELEY *OPEN SUNDAY*

SOLIHULL 0121 733 3727
• 149-151 STRATFORD ROAD

SOUTHAMPTON 023 8033 7770
• 33 LONDON ROAD

SOUTHGATE 020 8886 2777
• 79-81 CHASE SIDE

STAINES 01784 460777
• 4 THAMES STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*

SWINDON 01793 610992
• 8-9 COMMERCIAL ROAD

SWISS COTTAGE 020 7722 9777
• 21 NORTHWAYS PDE, FINCHLEY RD *OPEN SUNDAY*

TUNBRIDGE WELLS 01892 531543
• 28-30 ST JOHNS ROAD

WATFORD 01923 213533
• 478 ST ALBANS ROAD

WEYBRIDGE 01932 828525
• 43 CHURCH STREET, THE QUADRANT

WITHAM (ESSEX) 01376 501733
• 1 THE GROVE CENTRE

WOLVERHAMPTON 01902 312225
• 29-30 CLEVELAND STREET

YEOVIL 01935 700078 **OPENING SOON*
• 14 SILVER STREET **SUBJECT TO LEGAL COMPLETION*

OPENING HOURS: PLEASE TELEPHONE OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE **E-MAIL:** [insert store location]@ssav.com

Who are Sevenoaks?

Established as Sevenoaks Hi-Fi in 1972, we have grown steadily onto one of the leading independent home entertainment specialists in the UK, earning a reputation for outstanding service, choice and value for money. In 1995, reflecting our commitment to the emergent new technologies in home cinema, our name was changed to Sevenoaks Sound & Vision. We now have 49 stores across the land stocking a broad range of exceptional equipment and accessories.

How to shop at Sevenoaks

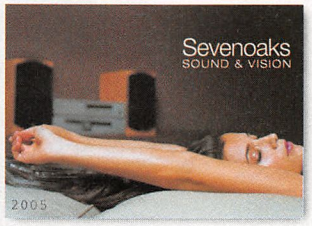
When it comes to making big decisions about what to buy, there's no substitute for actually road-testing your prospective purchases - seeing, hearing and experiencing the products in action, with the benefit of our expert knowledge and guidance to help you choose. To get the most from your Sevenoaks Sound & Vision experience, simply follow this checklist:

• **ESTABLISH YOUR AIMS** - Are you tweaking an existing system to improve sound or picture quality, or are you looking for a more fundamental and comprehensive upgrade?

• **BRING YOUR FAVOURITE DISCS WITH YOU** - To ensure you get the most from the music and movies in your collection, it pays to test equipment using those very same discs or records, That way you can readily compare levels of performance. However, if you prefer, we can supply a selection of demo discs - current mainstream entertainment that serves to highlight the capabilities of the equipment.

• **JUST ASK** - If you are unsure of any aspect of the products or technologies available, or would like more information about installation options, simply let us know and our staff will be happy to help you out.

• **TAKE YOUR TIME** - We want you to be as happy as possible with your choices, so please take as much time as you need to determine which products are right for you.



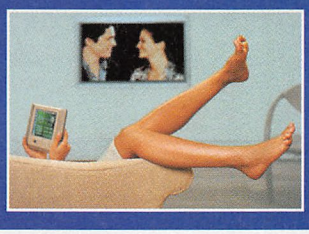
Hi-Fi & Home Cinema Guide - 2005 Edition

Pick-up a copy of our **New 72 Page Guide** at your nearest Sevenoaks Sound & Vision store or order a copy via our Website. The brochure will be posted to you (UK mainland addresses only) free of charge.

Custom Installation

Sevenoaks Sound & Vision's Custom Installation Service enables the integration of a home cinema or hi-fi system into your home as neatly and seamlessly as possible. All electronics can be hidden away, speakers discreetly mounted either in the wall or ceiling and the complete system operated via remote control.

Our installation experts are fully trained to the highest standards in all areas and provide a prompt, reliable and professional service. Whether you're looking for a multi-room system, a dedicated home cinema installation with a retractable screen and built-in speakers or an integrated control or lighting system, Sevenoaks Sound & Vision has a diverse range of products available to cater for all your requirements.



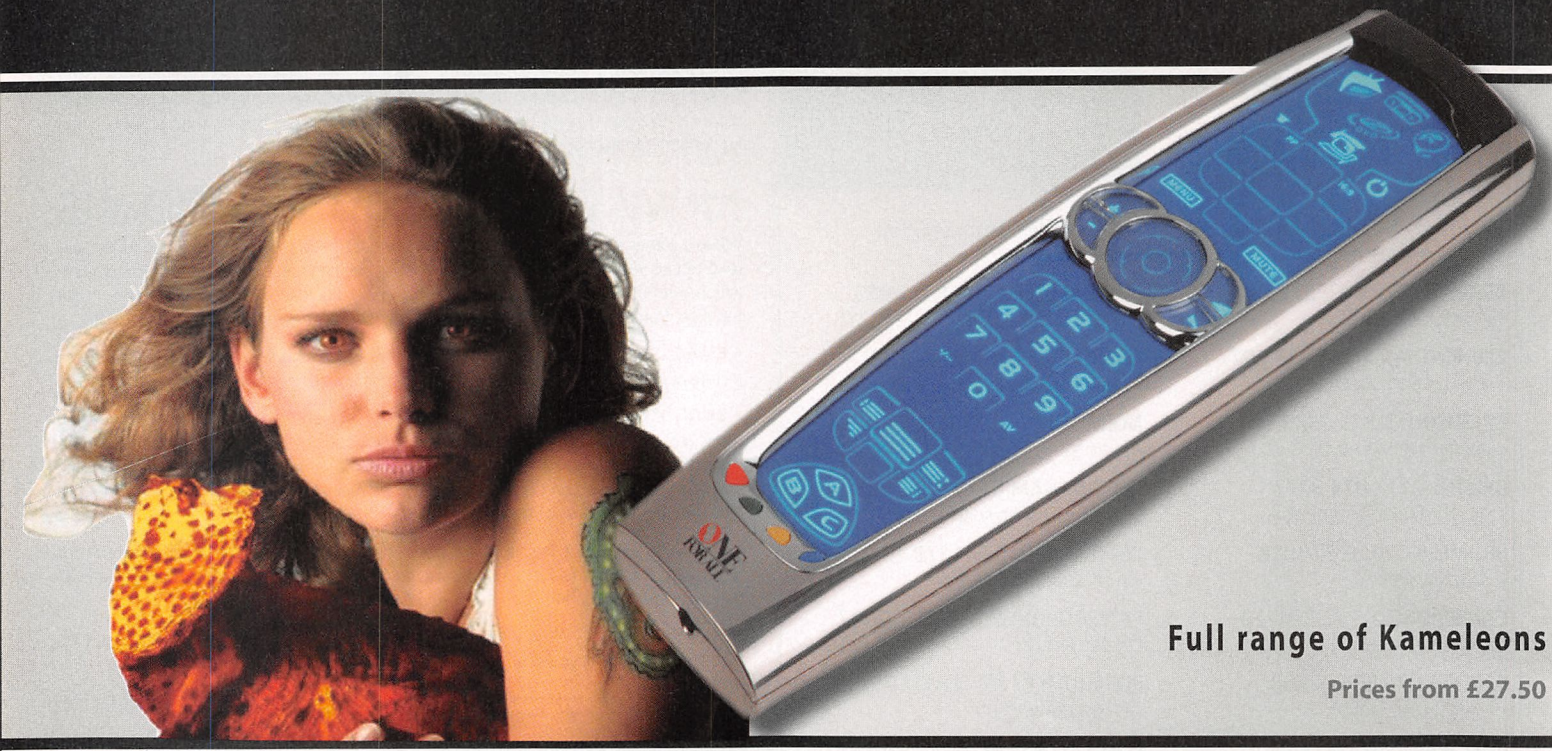
FREE CUSTOM INSTALLATION BROCHURE available now from your nearest store or via our website.

Sevenoaks Website

The Sevenoaks Sound & Vision website has news and information on the Sevenoaks group and detailed pages to help you locate your nearest store. In addition, there are hundreds of **SPECIAL OFFERS** and **STOCK CLEARANCE** items available from our stores nationwide - many with savings of up to 50%. To view our regularly updated product lists, visit **www.ssav.com** and click on **special offers**

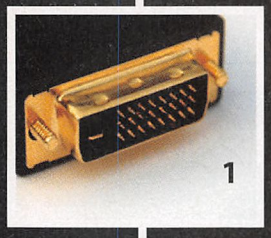
www.ssav.com

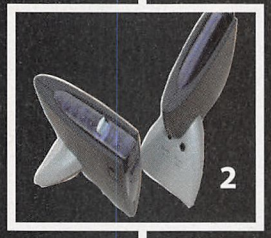
Lektropacks



Full range of Kameleons

Prices from £27.50





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Tel: 08700 711 911

Digital interconnects

Connect your digital kit with a superior lead

BUDGET Up to £350

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	CONDUCTOR: Coaxial	Optical	Length (m)	Diameter (mm)	Copper	Silver	Carbon	Other	Phono term	XLR term	BNC term	Toslink term	Directional
Atlas Compass	50	08.02/GT	★★★★★	Excellent dynamics, fine timing, rock-solid attack, and the tonal balance is spot-on.	●		1.0	8.5	●				●				
Black Rhodium First-Base Crystal	90	09.02/GT	★★★☆☆	Capable of a sound with punch and drive, and high detail resolution. But it's pricey.		●	1.0	7.0				●				●	
Black Rhodium Rhythm	25	09.02/GT	★★★★★	Tight and fast-sounding cable with crisp clarity - affordable with a great sound.	●		1.0	5.8	●	●			●				
Ecosse The Executive	50	Awd.04	★★★★☆	Lucid-sounding but it lacks the drive of the class best.	●		1.0	n/a	●				●				
Ecosse The Producer	21	09.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2000. You won't get better interconnects for the money.	●		0.8		●				●				
Ixos XHD-608-100	50	Awd.04	★★★★★	Best digital coaxial cable in Awards 2004.	●		1.0		●	●			●				●

Ixos XHD-608-100

It might only be a small connection between DVD player and receiver, but a good coaxial cable is still a vital cog in anyone's home cinema machinery. For the money, Ixos's XHD-608-100 is a highly talented upgrade that'll give your system a more muscular and detailed sound - a great buy, and our favourite coaxial cable.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004
BEST DIGITAL COAXIAL CABLE OVER £30
Ixos XHD-608-100

Nordost Moonglo II	179	09.02/GT	★★★★☆	Good but expensive. Consider if you're in possession of a very high-end system.	●		1.0		●	●			●	●	●		●
Nordost Moonglow Sl Shadow	368	09.00/GT	★★★★☆	There's no denying the MSS produces a fabulous sound, but it's expensive.	●		1.0		●	●			●	●	●		●
Profigold PGD4000	42	08.02/GT	★★★★☆	Well specified, weighty sounding cable. Higher frequencies are nicely resolved.	●		0.75		●				●				
Profigold PGD481	21	10.01/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Dynamics are particularly impressive for the price.	●		1.0		●				●				
QED QUNEX OT	30	10.01/GT	★★★★☆	Good value interconnect - the presentation is smooth without being boring.		●	1.0	5				●				●	
Supra Trico	45	01.05/GT	★★★★★	Bargain upgrade for almost any home cinema set-up.	●		1.0	8	●				●		●		●
Supra X-ZAC	60	09.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. The Supra X-ZAC is great for optical-only connections.		●	1.0	8				●				●	●
van den Hul Optocoupler	50	09.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. This is one of the best optical links around.		●	1.0	7.5				●				●	

CD players

A dedicated player will maximise CD sound quality

BUDGET Up to £600

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: Integrated	Multidisc	Transport	DAC	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: Coax digital out	Optical digital out	XLR out	RCA out	Coax digital in	Optical digital in	Headphone out	HDCD	CD Text	Memory	Display off	Finishes
Arcam DiVA CD73T	420	09.04/GT	★★★★★	Best CD player £250-£500 in Awards 2004. Leading choice at this price.	●				●	●		●					●	●	●	2
Audio Analogue Primo CD	475	07.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Amiable performer, but the class-leaders point offer a step-up in quality.	●				●			●								Sl
Cambridge Audio Azur 540C	200	08.05/GT	★★★★★	Stonking - the sound is the equal of machines that cost a whole lot more.	●				●	●		●						●		2
Cambridge Audio Azur 640C	250	09.04/GT	★★★★★	Best CD player under £250 in Awards 2004. Stunning value for money.	●				●	●		●						●		2
Denon DCD-485	140	01.02/ST	★★★★☆	This Denon is full of character and an exciting listen - match with care.	●					●		●			●			●	●	Bk
Exposure 2010s	600	04.05/GT	★★★★★	Great player - fabulous treble, great dynamics, and a weighty bottom end.	●				●	●								●	●	Sl
Inca Design Katana	600	04.05/GT	★★★★★	Up there with the best with its rich detail, musicality and sublime build.	●				●	●	●	●				●		●	●	Sl
Marantz CD5400	150	02.04/GT	★★★★★	Remarkable player for the money, with superb sound, looks and feel.	●				●	●		●			●		●	●		2
Myryad Z110	500	09.02/GT	★★★☆☆	This product lacks the magic of the company's established machines.	●				●									●	●	2
NAD C521BEE	200	02.04/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Open and involving, and still a bargain.	●				●			●						●		2
NAD C542	330	09.04/GT	★★★★★	Maintains NAD's impressive run of affordable, quality separates.	●				●	●		●				●		●		Gr
Rega Planet	498	11.02/ST	★★★★☆	A fine choice for those who want something just a little different.	●				●	●		●					●	●	●	2
Rotel RCD 1072	595	09.03/ST	★★★★☆	Beautifully built and a joy to use, but it lacks a little bit of sparkle.	●				●							●		●		Sl
Rotel RCD-02	380	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Punchy performer - bassheads will especially enjoy its tight delivery.	●				●			●				●		●		Sl
Sony SCD-XE597 (SACD)	150	Awd.04	★★★★☆	Fine player and it is worth a look if you like your music safe.	●					●		●			●			●		2
TEAC C-1D	240	08.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Respectable offering from Teac but unlikely to set hearts a-flutter.	●					●					●			●	●	Sl
Yamaha CDX-396	130	02.02/GT	★★★★☆	Smooth, system-friendly player - will tame bright-sounding systems.	●					●		●						●	●	Bl
Yamaha CDX-496	190	01.02/ST	★★★☆☆	The Yamaha is a good machine for the cash with a relaxing, warm sound.	●					●		●			●			●	●	Bl

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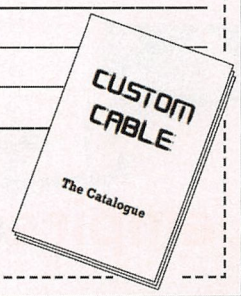

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

GLOSSARY
page 186

CD players continued...

A dedicated player will maximise CD sound quality

BUDGET £600 to £2000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: Intergrated	TYPE: Multidisc	TYPE: Transport	TYPE: DAC	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: Coax digital out	Optical digital out	XLR out	RCA out	Coax digital in	Optical digital in	Headphone out	HDCD	CD Text	Memory	Display off	Finishes
Arcam DiVA CD192	850	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Sensational disc-spinner with bags of sonic appeal.	●				●	●		●					●	●	●	2
Arcam FMJ CD36	1400	09.05/FT	★★★☆☆	A disappointment despite a top-class technical specification.	●				●	●		●					●			Sl
Audio Analogue Paganini	925	07.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Great looks with a fantastic remote control, but only average performance.	●				●			●								Sl
Creek CD50 Mk2	850	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Solid, smooth-sounding player with warmth and weight.	●				●	●		●						●		Sl
Cyrus CD6	650	04.05/GT	★★★★★	Best CD player £500-£1000 in Awards 2004. Astounding detail.	●					●		●						●	●	2
Cyrus CD8x	1000	07.05/GT	★★★★★	CD player Product of the Year in Awards 2004. Sensational detail.	●				●	●		●						●	●	2

Cyrus CD8x

The way our CD player Product of the Year brings music to life is worringly addictive – you can't wait to swap from one favourite track to the next. Bass is taut, well-defined and musical, while treble is smoother and incredibly refined, and vocals and instruments ooze emotion and life. This CD player is a dream come true.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
CD PLAYER
CYRUS CD8x

Cyrus DACX	1100	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Great DAC, which will improve on the sound of most CD players.			●		●	●	●	●	●						2
Exposure 22	1395	04.04/FT	★★★★☆	Rich, dynamic and detailed sound from a fuss-free design.	●				●	●								●	●	Al
Inca Design Katana SE	1000	07.05/GT	★★★★☆	Special edition of the Katana - big and brawny and sounds much the same.	●				●	●	●	●				●		●	●	Sl
Linn Genki	1100	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Gloriously musical and beautifully built - remains a fave of ours still.	●				●			●				●		●	●	Bk
Meridian G07	1595	06.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Plenty of substance, but the Meridian lacks the sparkle to really impress.	●				●	●		●						●	●	Bk
Moon Equinox	1950	07.04/FT	★★★★★	Class machine for those who plan long, indulgent listening sessions.	●				●			●						●	●	Bk
Myryad MXC600	1400	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	The unruffled sound is truly impressive - full of finesse and polish.	●				●			●					●	●		2
Naim CD5i	825	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Remains a fine-sounding option in an incredibly competitive market.	●							●						●	●	Bk
Naim CD5x	1450	12.04/FT	★★★★★	Musical, refined and built to last. Replaces the CD5i, well worth the wait.	●							●				●				Bk
Onkyo C-1VL	800	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	There are now far more capable players around for not much more money.	●				●	●		●						●	●	Sl
Orelle CD100evo2	1300	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Plenty of sonic prowess but looks a little pricey alongside some rivals.	●							●							●	Sl
Primare CD21	800	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Match with energetic, lively sounding kit for a successful system.	●				●	●	●	●					●			2
Quad CD-P2	1000	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Challenges the class-leaders in every area - sounds refined and involving.	●					●		●	●	●				●	●	Sl
Quad CD-S	650	09.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Capable performer, but lacks the sparkle to challenge the class-leaders.	●					●		●						●	●	Sl
Rega Jupiter	1098	03.03/ST	★★★★☆	Smooth, rich and detailed - this machine's warmth will appeal to many.	●				●	●		●					●	●	●	2
Roksan Caspian M series-1	1100	11.04/GT	★★★★★	A canny piece of kit and well worth the money - real class-contender.	●				●			●						●		Sl
Roksan Kandy MkIII	650	04.05/GT	★★★★☆	Not bad by any means but at this price it now gets left in the shade.	●				●			●						●		6
Sugden Bijou CD Master	1299	11.01	★★★★☆	Cute with plenty of weight and authority, but bass lines can sound slow.	●				●			●						●		Sl
Talk Electronics Thunder 2.2	1200	07.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Bold sound promises much, but it lacks subtlety and so is rather average.	●				●	●	●	●						●	●	2
Tube Technology Fusion CD64	1990	11.03/FT	★★★★★	It looks distinctive and sounds lovely - buy the tailor-made lead.	●				●	●		●	●	●			●	●	●	2
Unison Research Unico CD	1195	05.04/GT	★★★★☆	Gives you plenty of bang for your buck, but don't pair with bass-heavy kit.	●				●		●	●	●							St

BUDGET £2001 and over

Audionet ART V2	2400	01.04/FT	★★★★★	A big sound that allows long listening, not short on detail or dynamics.					●		●	●								2
Chord Electronics Choral One	2995	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	Great looking and superbly built - it sounds good too.	●				●			●						●		2
Denon DCD-SA1	5000	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Pair with the PMA-SA1 amp and the right speakers for gorgeous sound.	●				●	●	●	●							●	Sl
Linn Ikemi	2200	04.00/FT	★★★★☆	Precise and punchy sound, but we'd expect slightly more at this price.	●				●	●	●	●				●		●	●	Bk
Naim CDS3/XPS2	7244	07.04/FT	★★★★★	Best CD player over £2000 in Awards 2004. Fully justifies frightening price.	●							●				●		●	●	Bk
Resolution Audio Opus 21	2850	06.04/FT	★★★★★	This is the best disc spinner we've seen anywhere near this price.	●						●	●	●					●	●	3
Sony SCD-XA9000ES (SACD)	2400	06.04/FT	★★★★☆	This CD/SACD player excels in many areas, and is solid in every sense.	●				●	●		●			●		●	●		2
Sugden Masterclass	2700	06.02/FT	★★★★★	Excellent - superb when combined with the Masterclass amplifier.	●				●			●	●					●		Sl
TEAC D-70	5000	12.03/FT	★★★★★	With the P-70 CD transport this is up there with the finest around.			●				●		●	●					●	Bk
TEAC P-70	5500	12.03/FT	★★★★★	P-70/D-70 combo - a contender for the best player in the world.				●	●	●	●	●	●	●					●	Bk

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

GLOSSARY
page 186

KEF · CHORD · ProAc perfectly natural · Pro-Ject · QUAD · Panasonic · McLaren · NAD

DENON · mission

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Unilet Sound and Vision

Just look at this!

Have you seen all the brands we stock? No wonder we've been THE place to go for the best hi-fi for the past thirty years or so.

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So if you're the kind of person who is looking for something a little bit special, at a special price, give Unilet a call. You know we'll see eye to eye with you.

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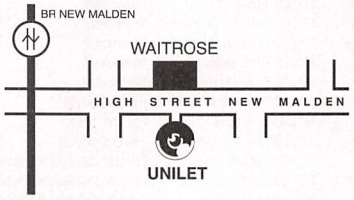

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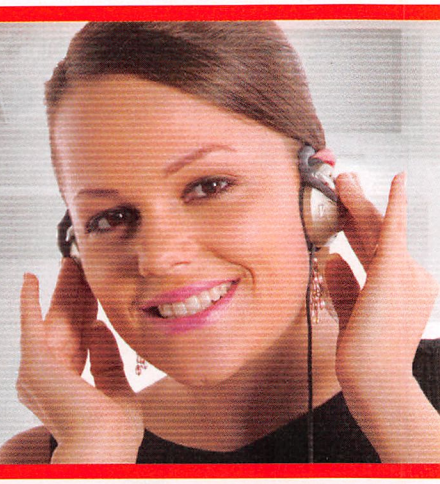

0% APR

Interest Free Credit is available on all purchases over £400*. Ask for details.

FREE DELIVERY

We deliver to anywhere on the UK mainland although some highland areas are excluded†. Please ask.

EXPERT ADVICE

Whether visiting our stores or calling our Mail order hotline, our fully trained consultants will be happy to offer expert advice and assistance on your purchase.

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Our fully trained consultants take pride in providing demonstrations on some of the newest technologies.

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Hi-Spek has a dedicated team of support personnel who are committed to providing excellent post sales service in case the need arises.

HUGE BUYING POWER

Hi-Spek is part of a buying group whose purchases exceed £1/2 billion which means that we get the very best offers from all main manufacturers and brands.

Panasonic

NEW!

TH42PE50 Brand New 42" Plasma TV

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

£DEAL

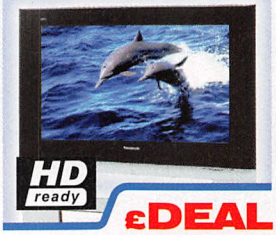
37" VERSION TH37PE50 ALSO AVAILABLE

Panasonic

NEW!

TH42PV500 Brand New 42" Plasma TV with HDMI

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²



£DEAL

FULL RANGE OF PANASONIC PRODUCTS IN STOCK!!

Panasonic

NEW!

TX32LXD500 Brand New LCD TV inc HDMI

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

£DEAL

ALSO AVAILABLE IN 26" VERSION

Panasonic

NEW!

PTAE700
Award Winning Projector

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

- 10bit full digital processing
- 1024 shades of graduation
- Smooth screen technology
- 26db Low Fan noise

TMMP £1699

£1349

NOW AVAILABLE WITH FREE SCREEN WORTH UP TO £200!

Full range in stock & on display. Here is a small selection.

Panasonic

TX17LX2	17" LCD TV inc stand	New low price!!	SALE	CALL
TX23LXD50	23" LCD TV inc stand	New model!!	SALE	CALL
TX26LXD50	26" LCD TV inc stand	Free DVD/VCR combi !!	SALE	CALL
TX32LXD50	32" LCD TV inc stand	Free DVD/VCR combi !!	SALE	CALL
TH37PE50	37" Plasma TV	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
TH42PE50	42" Plasma tv	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
TX26LXD500	26" LCD TV / idtv / hdmi / stand	Brand new model!!	SALE	CALL
TX32LXD500	32" LCD TV / idtv / hdmi / stand	Brand new model!!	SALE	CALL
TH37PV500	37" Plasma TV +hdmi	Free DVD recorder!!	SALE	CALL
TH42PV500	42" Plasma TV + hdmi	Free DVD recorder!!	SALE	CALL
TH50PV500	50" Plasma TV + hdmi	Free DVD recorder!!	SALE	CALL
TH37PW7	37" Plasma TV + board	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£1,299.99
TH42PW7	42" Plasma TV + board	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£1,599.99
TX28DTM1	28" freeview tv/stand	New low price!!	£499.99	£319.99
TX28PM12	28" 100hz nicam tv /stand	New model!!	£499.99	£359.99
TX28DTX11	28" 100hz freeview tv/stand	New model!!	£599.99	£399.99
TX32PM12	32" 100hz nicam tv /stand	New model!!	£799.99	£659.99
TX32PD50	Award winning tv inc stand	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	£999.99	£799.99
PTAE700	LCD projector	Free screen while stocks last!	£1,599.99	£1,349.99
SCHT530	DVD home cinema system	New model!!	SALE	£229.99
SCHT880W	DVD rec home cinema sys	New model!!	SALE	CALL
SCHT1500	DVD rec home cinema sys	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
DMRES10	DVD recorder	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
DMRES30	DVD / VCR combi recorder	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL

TOSHIBA

NEW!

32WL56 Brand New 32" LCD TV With HDMI Inc Stand

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

£DEAL

NOW WITH FREE MATCHING DVD PLAYER!!

TOSHIBA

NEW!

37WL56 Brand New 37" LCD TV With HDMI Inc Stand

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

£1479

NOW WITH FREE MATCHING DVD PLAYER!

Full range in stock & on display. Here is a small selection.

TOSHIBA

17WL46	17" LCD TV inc stand	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£369.99
17WLT46	17" LCD freeview TV/stnd	New model!!	SALE	£449.99
17WLD46	17" LCD TV built in DVD/stnd	New model!!	SALE	CALL
23WLD46	23" LCD TV built in DVD/stnd	New model!!	SALE	CALL
20WL56	20" LCD TV inc stand	New model!!	SALE	CALL
23WL56	23" LCD TV inc stand	New model!!	SALE	CALL
27WL56	27" LCD T V + hdmi / stand	Free DVD player!!	SALE	CALL
32WL56	32" LCD TV + hdmi / stand	Free DVD player!!	SALE	CALL
37WL56	37" LCD TV + hdmi / stand	Free DVD player!!	SALE	CALL
32ZP48	32" 100hz picture frame TV	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£749.99
36ZP48	36" 100hz picture frame TV	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£899.99
28Z44	28" nicam TV inc stand	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
28ZH46	28"100hz TV inc stand	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
32ZH46	32" 100hz TV inc stand	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
RDXS32	DVD rec + 80gb h/drive	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
RDXS34	DVD rec + 160gb h/drive	New model!!	SALE	£299.99
DVR15	DVD recorder/vcr combi	New model!!	SALE	CALL
SD26VB	DVD/VCR combi	New model!!	SALE	CALL
SD150E	DVD player	Multiregion	SALE	£59.99
SD350E	DVD player with hdmi	Multiregion	SALE	£99.99

Offers and deals subject to change - please check

TOSHIBA

NEW!

RDXS34 Brand New DVD Recorder + 160Gb Hard Drive

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

- Multi Drive Format
- DV Input
- PAL Progressive Scan
- Silver

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ SEPTEMBER 2005

HD ready

TMMP £399.99

£299

FULL RANGE OF TOSHIBA PRODUCTS IN STORE!!

TOSHIBA

NEW!

SD350 Brand New DVD Player With HDMI

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

- Toshiba's first DVD player with integrated HDMI technology.
- Multiregion
- Price quoted below for multiregion
- Free delivery

HD ready (Image for illustration purposes only)

£99

BRAND NEW SD150 ALSO AVAILABLE

FREE 0% APR
10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT

10 months Interest Free Credit is available on all purchases over £400. Subject to status. Ask for Written Details. Eg; Cash Price £500. Deposit £50. 9 Equal Monthly Payments of £50. Total Payable £500. 0% APR.

Offers and deals subject to change - please check.
*Subject to status. This is available to visitors to our stores and mail order customers.
†Delivery is normally next day although larger purchase may take 3-4 days.
²Ask for written details.

SONY

KDEP42XS1 Brand New
42" Plasma TV & Stand

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

TMMP £2999.99

£1999

CHECK OUT OUR LATEST DEAL ON THIS AWARD WINNING PLASMA TV!

SONY

KLVL32M1
32" LCD TV Inc Stand

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

TMMP £1499.99

£999

FULL RANGE OF SONY PRODUCTS AVAILABLE IN STORE!!

SONY

NEW!

NWHD5 Brand New
Hard Drive Walkman

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

- Available in black/ red/silver
- Free delivery

£DEAL

FULL RANGE OF PERSONAL WALKMANS AVAILABLE

SONY

STSDB900 Award Winning
Digital DAB Tuner

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

- AM/FM/DAB Tuner
- DAB QS tuner
- Aluminium front panel

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION NOVEMBER 2004
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004 PRODUCT OF THE YEAR TUNER SONY ST-SDB900

TMMP £249.99

£169

RANGE OF SONY HIFI SEPARATES AVAILABLE

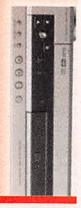
SONY

NEW!

RDRGXD500 Award Winning DVD Recorder

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

- Digital Freeview Tuner Built-in
- Chasing Playback
- DTT STB
- DVD-R/DVD+R/DVD-RW



WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION JUNE 2005

£DEAL

FULL RANGE OF SONY DVD RECORDERS AVAILABLE

Full range in stock & on display. Here is a small selection.

SONY

KLV17HR3	17" LCD TV inc stand	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
KLV20SR3	20" LCD TV inc stand	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
KLV23HR3	23" LCD TV inc stand	New model!!	SALE	CALL
KLV27HR3	27" LCD TV inc stand	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
KLV30HR3	30" LCD TV inc stand	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
KEP37M1	37" Plasma TV/stand	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
KEP42M1	42" Plasma TV/stand	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
KDEP37XS1	37" digital Plasma TV/stand	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
KDEP42XS1	42" digital Plasma TV/stand	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	£2,999.99	£1,999.99
KV28DL11	28" freeview TV/stand	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£379.99
KV28HX15	28" nicam TV inc stand	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£339.99
KF50SX300	50" grand Wega TV	New low price!!	£1,599.99	£1,159.99
KF42SX300	42" grand Wega TV	New low price!!	£1,399.99	£999.99
VPLHS3	LCD projector	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£999.99
VPLHS50	LCD projector	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£1,599.99
DAVDZ100	New home cinema system	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£191.99
DAVSB100	Home cinema system	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£149.99
DAVDZ500F	New home cinema system	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£373.99
DAVSR2	Home cinema system	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£463.99
STRDB2000B	Home theatre receiver, Black	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£249.99
STRDB795B	Home theatre receiver	Award winner	SALE	£239.99
RDRGX210	DVD recorder	Award winner	SALE	CALL
RDRGXD500	DVD rec inc freeview	Award winner	SALE	CALL
RDRHX510	DVD rec + hard drive	New model!!	SALE	CALL

TEAC

NEW!

REF300 MK2 Brand New
HiFi System With DAB Tuner

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

£479

AWARD WINNING LEGACY 600 & 700 SYSTEMS AT NEW LOW PRICES!

TEAC

NEW!

REF250 DAB Brand New
Micro System

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

- Plays CD and CD-R/RW discs
- 25W + 25W
- DAB AM/FM stereo tri-band tuner

£229

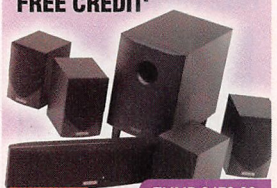
ALL TEAC PRODUCTS ON DISPLAY AND IN STOCK!

MISSION

NEW!

M30i Award Winning
Speaker Package

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²



WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION APRIL 2004

TMMP £479.99

£399

ALSO AVAILABLE IN SILVER

Full range in stock & on display. Here is a small selection.

BOSE

AM3	Stereo sats & sub	10% free goods offer!!	SALE	CALL
AM5	Stereo sats & sub	10% free goods offer!!	SALE	CALL
AM6	Home cinema package	10% free goods offer!!	SALE	CALL
AM10	Home cinema package	10% free goods offer!!	SALE	CALL
AM15	Home cinema package	10% free goods offer!!	SALE	CALL
LIFESTYLE 18MK2	DVD home cinema sys	10% free goods offer!!	SALE	CALL
LIFESTYLE 28MK2	DVD home cinema sys	10% free goods offer!!	SALE	CALL
LIFESTYLE 38	DVD home cinema sys	10% free goods offer!!	SALE	CALL
LIFESTYLE 48	DVD home cinema sys	10% free goods offer!!	SALE	CALL
SOUNDOCK	iPOD docking station	10% free goods offer!!	SALE	£249.99

Lifestyle 48
Lifestyle System

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

CALL NOW FOR EXCLUSIVE DEAL ON THESE SYSTEMS!

£DEAL

BOSE

Lifestyle 38 Brand New Lifestyle System

This high-performing Lifestyle® DVD system digitally stores up to 200 hours of music and adds life to movies. Includes progressive scan DVD/CD player and Direct/ Reflecting® cube speaker arrays. ADAPTiQ® system customizes sound to your room.

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

CALL NOW FOR EXCLUSIVE DEAL ON THESE SYSTEMS!

£DEAL

BOSE

NEW!

SOUNDOCK Brand New
Docking Station For Apple iPOD

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

£249

FANTASTIC DOCKING STATION FOR YOUR iPOD MINI

Full range in stock & on display. Here is a small selection.

Pioneer

PDP435XDE	43" Plasma TV + digital tuner	2 free flights to usa!!	SALE	CALL
PDP505XDE	50" Plasma TV + digital tuner	3 free flights to usa!!	SALE	CALL
DCS232	Home cinema system	Brand new model!!	SALE	CALL
RCS55	Home cinema sys + DVD rec	Brand new model!!	SALE	CALL
RCS77	Home cinema sys + DVD rec	Brand new model!!	SALE	CALL
VSX414S	Home theatre receiver	Brand new model!!	SALE	CALL
VSX515S	Home theatre receiver	Brand new model!!	SALE	CALL
VSX915S	Home theatre receiver	Brand new model!!	SALE	CALL
VSX1015S	Home theatre receiver	Brand new model!!	SALE	CALL
VSX2014S	Home theatre receiver	Award winner!	SALE	£549.00
VSXAX5AiS	Home theatre amplifier	Award winner!	SALE	£599.00
VSAAX10AiS	Home theatre amplifier	Award winner!	SALE	£2,099.00
DV380	Award winning DVD player	Brand new model!!	SALE	CALL
DV585	Award winning DVD player	Brand new model!!	SALE	CALL
DV668AV	Award winning DVD player	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
DV868AVi	Award winning DVD player	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£679.00
DVR433	DVD recorder	Brand new model!!	SALE	CALL
DVR530	DVD rec + 80gb h/drive	Brand new model!!	SALE	CALL
DVR630	DVD rec + 160gb h/drive	Brand new model!!	SALE	CALL

Offers and deals subject to change - please check

Pioneer

PDP435XDE Award Winning
Plasma TV with Freeview Tuner

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

HD ready

TMMP £4499

£DEAL

PLUS 2 FREE FLIGHTS TO USA!!!

Pioneer

VSXAX5AiS Award Winning Home Cinema Receiver

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

- 7 x 120 Watts
- I.LINK interface (two-way)
- Universal video converter
- MCACC

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION NOVEMBER 2004

TMMP £1199

£599

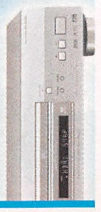
VSX2014i NOW ONLY £549! ALSO VSAAX10AIS £2099!

Pioneer

DV868AVi Award Winning
DVD Player With HDMI

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

- High definition Multimedia Interface
- Dual Pure Progressive Scan for PAL/ NTSC



HD ready

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION NOVEMBER 2004

£839

ALSO DVR920 250GB DVD RECORDER ONLY £999

"Thank you very much. First class service from Hi Spek."
Mr E.Thomas

"Thank you very much or your prompt response."
Mr R.Cox

"So thank you for a very efficient service."
Mr J.Rowley

"Hi Spek.. offered a good service and were always friendly and polite."
Mr R.Thomas

"Service of this excellence deserves recognition... Thank you!"
Mr P.Scott

PHILIPS

Full range in stock & on display. Here is a small selection.

15PF5120	15" LCD TV inc stand	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£299.99
17PF8946	15" LCD TV inc stand	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£349.99
26PF5520	26" HD LCT + IDTV	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
26PF9956	26" LCD TV inc pixel+/stnd	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£999.99
26PF4310	26" LCD TV inc stand	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
32PF5520	32" HD LCD + IDTV	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
37PF9946	37" Plasma TV & built in tuner	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£1,099.99
42PF9946	42" Plasma TV & built in tuner	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£1,299.99
32PF9986	32" LCD TV inc pixel+/stnd	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£1,599.99
37PF9986	37" LCD TV inc pixel+/stnd	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
42PF9986	42" LCD TV inc pixel+/stnd	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
42PF5520	42" HD LCT TV	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
42PF9966	42" Plasma TV with pixel+	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£2,099.99
28PW6518	28" nicam TV inc stand	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£279.99
28DW6559	28" freeview digital TV/stand	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£299.99
28PW9509	28" 100hz pixel+2 TV	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL
32PW9509	32" Dolby digital TV/pixel+	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£599.99
DVDR615	DVD recorder / DV in	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£199.99
HDRW720	DVD rec + 80gb h/drive	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£447.99
DVDR725	DVD rec + 160gb h/drive	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	£419.99
DVP620	DVD/VCR combi	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	SALE	CALL

PHILIPS

32PF9986 Award Winning 32" LCD TV & Stand

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

TMMP £2999.99

£1599

CALL NOW FOR AMAZING DEALS ON 37PF9986 & 42PF9986!

PHILIPS

32PW9509 Award Winning 32" 100Hz Widescreen TV

TMMP £849.99

£599

28" VERSION 28PW9509 NOW ALSO ON AN AMAZING DEAL!

KEF

KIT100 Award Winning Home Cinema System

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

KEF PRODUCTS AVAILABLE IN STORE

- DTS decoder, Dolby Dig, Dolby Pro Logic II
- DVD player • Digital Tuner

£1199

FULL RANGE OF KEF PRODUCTS AVAILABLE IN STORE!!

SHARP

NEW!

LC32P50E Brand New 32" HD Ready LCD TV

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

£DEAL

FULL RANGE OF SHARP PRODUCTS AVAILABLE IN STORE!!

SHARP

NEW!

LC32GD7E Brand New 32" HD Ready LCD TV

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

£DEAL

OTHER MODELS ALSO AVAILABLE

SHARP

NEW!

LC32GA5 Brand New 32" LCD TV Inc Stand

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

TMMP £1499.99

£899

FULL RANGE OF SHARP LCD TV'S AVAIL INC LC20SH1E, LC15SH1E

PURE

NEW!

SONUS 1XT Award Winning Digital Radio

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

FREE DELIVERY TO YOUR DOORSTEP!

£119

FULL RANGE OF PURE DAB PRODUCTS AVAILABLE

KEF

KHT2005.2 Award Winning Speaker Package

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

KEF PRODUCTS AVAILABLE IN STORE

TMMP £799.99

£DEAL

20% FREE GOODS OFFER!! CALL IN NOW FOR A FANTASTIC DEAL!!

JVC

DRMH30 Award Winning DVD Recorder With Hard Drive

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

- 160GB Hard Drive
- DVD navigation
- Animated thumbnail
- Live memory function

TMMP £699.99

£349

FULL RANGE OF JVC LCD TV'S AND DVD RECORDERS NOW ON SALE!

JVC

NEW!

LT32DS6 Brand New 32" LCD TV With Freeview & HDMI

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

£DEAL

ALSO AVAILABLE IN 26" & 37" VERSIONS

JVC

DRMX1 DVD Recorder With 160GB Hard Drive + Nicam VHS Deck 3-In-1

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

- Built-in Twin Tuner
- NICAM Stereo Decoder
- Pal Progressive Compatability
- NTSC Playback on PAL TV (DVD)

TMMP £559.99

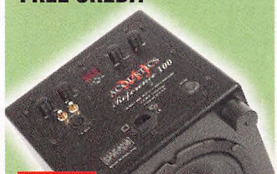
£437

FULL RANGE OF JVC DVD RECORDERS IN STOCK!!

MJ ACOUSTICS

REF 100 Award Winning Subwoofer

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²



£349

Q SERIES NOW ON SALE. CALL FOR FANTASTIC DEALS!!

KEF

Q SERIES Award Winning Speakers

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

KEF PRODUCTS AVAILABLE IN STORE

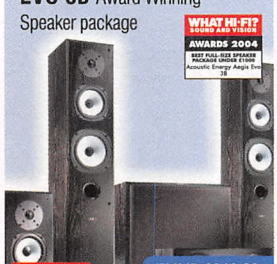
Q1	£129
Q4	£229
Q5	£329
Q7	£429
Q2DS	£249
Q9C	£109
Q6C	£69
QCOMPACT	£109

£DEAL

Q SERIES NOW ON SALE. CALL FOR FANTASTIC DEALS!!

((AE)) ACOUSTIC ENERGY

EVO 3B Award Winning Speaker package



TMMP £949.99

£699

FANTASTIC DEALS ON ACOUSTIC ENERGY EVO RANGE

((AE)) ACOUSTIC ENERGY

AELITE 5.1 Award Winning Speaker Package

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

£DEAL

AELITE & AEGIS SERIES SPEAKER ON DEMO AND NOW ON SALE!

ARCAM

DV79 Award Winning DVD Player

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

- HDMi video output
- PAL & NTSC progressive scan
- DD, DTS, Dolby Pro Logic II & DVD-Audio
- 12-bit 216 MHz video DACs

£999

15% FREE GOODS OFFER. ASK FOR DETAILS

ARCAM

AVR300 Award Winning Home Cinema Receiver

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

- 7x 100 watts per channel
- RDS tuner
- Dolby Digital EX, DTS ES, DTS 24/96 & Dolby Pro logic IIx decoding

£1299

15% FREE GOODS OFFER. ASK FOR DETAILS

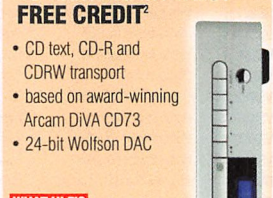
ARCAM

NEW!

SOLO Brand New CD/AMP & DAB Tuner

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

- CD text, CD-R and CDRW transport
- based on award-winning Arcam DiVA CD73
- 24-bit Wolfson DAC



£999

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Offers and deals subject to change - please check

> "This level of service is quite rare these days and is much appreciated..." Mrs G.Keys

> "I could not have wished for a better or more prompt response.." Mrs R. Wheeler

> "Thank you...I'm impressed with the way this problem has been handled" Mr T. Mc Laughlin

> "..Such after sales service is rarely seen these days..thank you!" Mrs P. Bailey

> "would not hesitate to use Hi-Spek again or recommend to a friend!" Mrs J. Hart

YAMAHA

NEW!

RXV4600 Brand New Home Cinema Reciever with HDMI

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

- 7 Channel high power amplifier config
- 5.1 Channel external decoder input
- 5 Optical, 3 coaxial and 2 optical inputs

HD ready

£999

20% FREE GOODS OFFER
ASK FOR DETAILS

YAMAHA

YSP1 Digital Sound Projector

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

No more multiple speakers, no more clutter, no more hiding wires ... Just the pure excitement of bringing your movies and music to life.

- Capable of delivering true 5.1-channel sound.
- No need for extra amplifier/ speakers

TMMP £3499.99

£799

HOME CINEMA CHOICE
INNOVATION OF THE YEAR 2005

YAMAHA

NEW!

DSPAX757SE Brand New Home Cinema Amplifier

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

- Replaces award winning DSPAX750SE

(Image for illustration purposes only)

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ SEPTEMBER 2005

£499

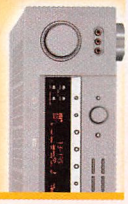
20% FREE GOODS OFFER
ASK FOR DETAILS

YAMAHA

RXV450RDS Award Winning Home Cinema Receiver

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

FREE 5.1 SPEAKER PACKAGE
Comprising 5 Satellites & Subwoofer Worth Up To £200!!



£299

AMAZING DEAL ON THIS
AWARD WINNING RECEIVER

Full range in stock & on display. Here is a small selection.

YAMAHA

DSPAX757SE	New 7.1 ch av amplifier	20% free goods offer	NEW	£499.99
RXV357	New 5.1 ch av receiver	20% free goods offer	NEW	£169.99
RXV457	New 6.1 ch av receiver	20% free goods offer	NEW	£299.99
RXV657	New 7.1 ch av receiver	20% free goods offer	NEW	£469.99
YSP1	Award winning system	2 year warranty	NEW	£799.99
CDRHD1500	CD recorder	2 year warranty	SALE	£CALL
RXV1500	New 7.1 ch av receiver	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	£799.99	£499.99
RXV2500	New 7.1 ch av receiver	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	£999.99	£699.99
KX393	Award winning cassette	2 year warranty	SALE	£CALL
KX580SE	Award winning cassette	2 year warranty	SALE	£CALL
TX396L	Tuner	2 year warranty	99.99	£79.99
TX492RDS	Tuner with RDS	2 year warranty	129.99	£89.99
RXV450RDS	6.1 ch av receiver	With free 5.1 speaker package	SALE	£299.99
DSPAX750SE	7.1 ch av amplifier	Award winning model!!	£449.99	£339.99
DSPZ9	Flagship av amplifier	Award winning model!!	£3,299.99	£2,599.99
DVDS550	DVD player/ multiregion	Fantastic sale deals at hispek!!	£149.99	£99.99
RXSL100RDS	Slimline 6.1 ch av receiver	With matching dvd player	£459.99	£359.99
AV 50 PACK	5.1 ch av sys inc 6 spkrs	Fantastic value	£329.99	£179.99
CDRHD1300	Award winning CD recorder	2 year warranty	£599.99	£199.99

YAMAHA

NEW!

AV50 Fantastic Value Home Theatre package

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

TMMP £279.99

£179

AMAZING VALUE 5.1 HOME
CINEMA PACKAGE - 5 SATELLITE
SPEAKERS & ACTIVE SUB

DENON

NEW!

AVR1906 Brand New Home Cinema Receiver

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

- Dolby Digital & DTS decoding
- 6 Channel ext input
- DTS Neo:6 and DTS 96/24 Cinema & Music Surround Decoding

(Image for illustration purposes only)

£299

AMAZING DEALS ON ALL DENON
HOME CINEMA EQUIPMENT!

DENON

DHT500SD Award Winning Home Theatre System

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

BEST BUY WHAT VIDEO

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ SEPTEMBER 2004

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004 PRODUCT OF THE YEAR ALL-IN-ONE SYSTEMS DENON DHT-500SD

HOME CINEMA Best Buy

TMMP £449.99

£419

MULTIREGION VERSION
ALSO AVAILABLE

DENON

AVR2805 Award Winning Home Theatre Receiver

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004 BEST MULTICHANNEL RECEIVER £500-£750 Denon AVR-2805

BEST BUY WHAT VIDEO

TMMP £649.99

£566

HOME CINEMA CHOICE
BEST MID RANGE RECEIVER 2005

DENON

NEW!

DM35 DAB Brand New Micro HiFi with DAB Tuner

- Replaces highly acclaimed DM31 award winning system
- Super dynamic Bass
- MP3 & WMA playback
- 2x 22w RMS power output

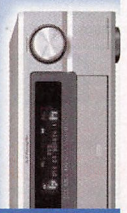
£DEAL

BRAND NEW DM33 SYSTEM
ALSO AVAILABLE

DENON

AVR3805 Award Winning Home Cinema Receiver

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²



HOME CINEMA Best Buy

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ AUGUST 2004

BEST BUY WHAT VIDEO

TMMP £949.99

£799

FULL RANGE OF DENON HOME THEATRE
RECEIVERS ON DISPLAY & ON SALE

Full range in stock & on display. Here is a small selection.

DENON

AVR1906	7.1 ch av receiver	2 year warranty	SALE	£329.99
AVR2105	7.1 ch av receiver	2 year warranty	SALE	£349.99
AVR2106	New 7.1 A/V Receiver	2 year warranty	SALE	£449.99
AVR2805	7 ch av receiver	2 year warranty	SALE	£566.99
AVR3805	7 ch av receiver	2 year warranty	SALE	£799.99
AVCA1SR G	Flagship av amplifier	2 year warranty	SALE	£1,949.99
DVD1710	DVD player/ multiregion	2 year warranty	SALE	£89.99
DVD1910	DVD player/ multiregion	2 year warranty	SALE	£149.99
DVD2910	DVD player/ multiregion	2 year warranty	SALE	£526.99
DVD3910	DVD player/ multiregion	2 year warranty	SALE	£786.99
DM33	New micro sys exc spkrs	2 year warranty	SALE	CALL
DM33S	New micro sys inc spkrs	2 year warranty	SALE	CALL
DM35 DAB	Micro system exc spkrs	Award winning system	SALE	CALL
DM35 DAB / S	Micro system inc spkrs	2 year warranty	SALE	CALL
DF101	Mini system exc spkrs	Award winning system	SALE	£296.99
DF101/S	Mini system inc spkrs	2 year warranty	SALE	£380.99
DRRF101	Df101 matching cassette	2 year warranty	SALE	£126.99
201CD	Mini system exc spkrs	Award winning system	SALE	£512.99
201CD/S	Mini system inc spkrs	2 year warranty	SALE	£630.99
DRR201	201cd matching cassette	2 year warranty	SALE	£158.88
PMA355	Integrated amplifier	2 year warranty	SALE	£179.99
TU1800DAB	New tuner with dab	2 year warranty	SALE	£249.99
TU260LMK2	Award winning tuner	2 year warranty	SALE	£109.99
DRW695	Twin cassette deck	2 year warranty	SALE	£159.99

Full range in stock & on display. Here is a small selection.

NAD

C352CT Award Winning Amplifier

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004 PRODUCT OF THE YEAR STEREO AMPLIFIER NAD C352CT

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ JUNE 2004

£349

C542 Award Winning Amplifier

C521 CD Player **£179**
C320BEE Amplifier **£199**
C372 Amplifier **£437**

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ SEPTEMBER 2004

10 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT²

£299

OFFERS
PROMOTIONS & PRICES

Whilst we endeavour to put in the latest and most current information in respect of offers, prices and promotions, there is a chance that some of these deals will have ended or changed by the time the magazine comes to press. Please check the latest offers and deals by calling us at one of the numbers below. The maximum validity date for any price or offer is from 23rd August to 28th September 2005. Omissions and errors excepted. E&OE. Please also note that the deals we offer in store may be different from our online offers.

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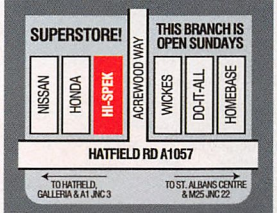

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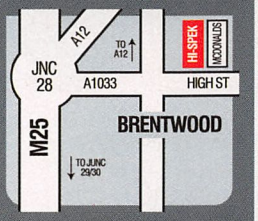

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Saturday 27th August **9am - 6pm**
Sunday 28th August **10am - 4pm**
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Monday 29th August **9am - 6pm**
(ALL BRANCHES)

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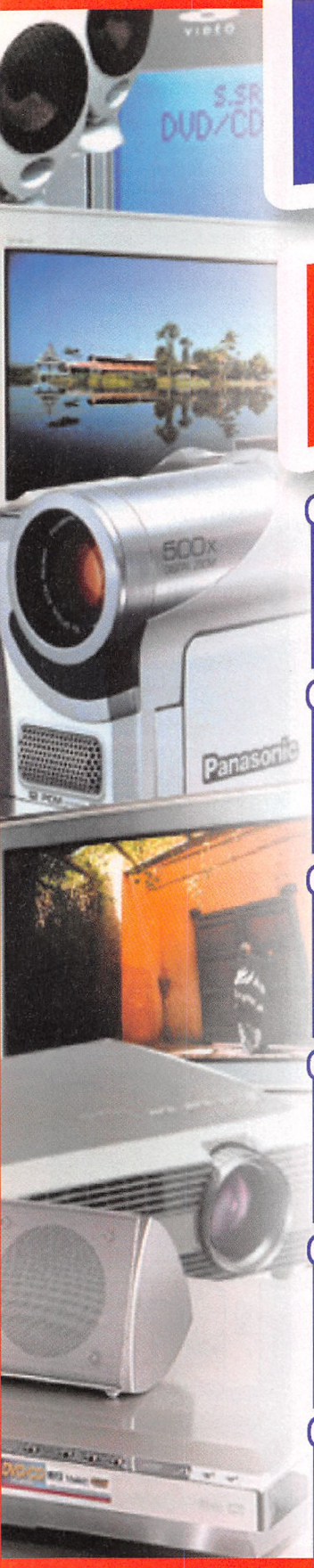

HITACHI 32LD7200	HITACHI 42PD7200	SONY KLVL32M1	SONY KEP32M1	SONY KEP42M1
SONY KLV17HR3	PANASONIC TX22LX2	SONY KLV26HG2	SONY KLV27HR3S	PANASONIC TX32LXD50
SONY KDLL32MRX1	SONY KDEP37XS1	PANASONIC TH37PE50	SONY KDEP42XS1	HITACHI 42PD5200
PANASONIC TH37PV500	SONY KDEP42MRX1	PIONEER PDP435	PANASONIC TH42PV500	PIONEER PDP505
SONY STRDB795	DENON AVR2805	PIONEER VSXAX5i	DENON AVR3805	PIONEER VSA AX10Ai
PANASONIC DMREH50	PIONEER DV868i	KEF KHT2005.2	MISSION F51AV	SONY RDRHX510

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Recorders

Archive your favourite tunes with a recorder to suit your system

BUDGET Up to £1500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	FORMATS: CD-R	CD-RW	Minidisc	Hard disk	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: Cassette	Coax digital in	Optical digital in	Line in	Coax digital out	Optical digital	Headphone out	Dolby	Dolby HXPro	Remote	No. of heads	Finishes
Acoustic Solutions SP150	150	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Amiable CD storage/player solution, especially for non-PC owners.				●								-		●	-	Sl
Denon CDR-W1500	450	02.03/GT	★★☆☆☆	Twin-tray machine - it's too expensive, so can't compete with rivals.	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●			●		2
Pioneer CT-W606DR (dual)	200	08.01	★★★★☆	Good budget buy for making faithful tape-to-tape copies.					●			●			●	B/C	●		2	Bk
Pioneer MJ-D508	200	07.02	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Great for recording pop music.			●			●	●	●	●		●	-			-	Bk
Pioneer PDR-609	280	02.03/GT	★★★★☆	Product of the Year in Awards '02. Good, but rivals have overtaken.	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	-			-	Bk
Sony MDS-JE480	130	09.02/FT	★★★☆☆	Capable deck for the money - does a good job of recording.			●				●	●								2
Yamaha CDR-HD1300MkII	600	02.03/GT	★★★★★	Best CD/HDD recorder in Awards 2004. CD-RW and 120G hard disk.	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●	●					Bk

Yamaha CDR-HD1300II

Product of choice in this category last year, the Yamaha has all the bells and whistles allowing you to rip, burn and archive CD-R/-RWs via the spacious hard disk. The enhanced MkII version now has a storage-friendly 120GB hard drive (up from 80GB), which is good for around 180 hours of uncompressed music.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004 BEST CD/HDD RECORDER Yamaha CDR-HD1300II

Yamaha KX-580SE	250	08.01	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Quality copies and good sound.					●			●			●	B/C/S	●		2	Bk

Music servers

One smart hard-drive box to hold all your tunes and fill your home with music

BUDGET Up to £3000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	RECORDING: Capacity (GB)	Max (GB)	Uncompressed	MP3	Max MP3 data rate	INPUTS: Coaxial	Optical	Line	OUTPUTS: Coaxial	Optical	Line	Zones	Wireless built-in
Cyrus Linkserver Solo	1500	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Probably the best-sounding system of its kind, but it's expensive.	80	800	●	●	320	●	●	●	●	●	●	1	
Sonos Digital Music System	899	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Hats off to Sonos, this wireless music package is a work of genius.	-	-			-			●			●	32	●

Sonos Digital Music System

It's not often we see a product that genuinely breaks the mould, but this is it – an amazingly effective combination of wireless music routing and multiroom distribution. It is easy to install and even easier to use – a truly seamless wireless operation with terrific sound quality. The hottest thing to hit hi-fi in years.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION BEST IN CLASS

Yamaha MusicCAST server	1800	11.03	★★★★★	Wireless multiroom system - coolest product we've tested in years.	80	2000	●	●	320	●	●	●	●	●	●	8	●

Music server clients

Link with a music server and deliver tunes to every room in the house

BUDGET Up to £1,000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	INPUTS: Coaxial	Optical	Line	OUTPUTS: Coaxial	Optical	Line	Built-in amp	Tuner FM/AM	Wireless built-in
Apple AirPort Express	89	Awd.04	★★★★★	Technology Product of the Year in Awards 2004.					●	●			●
Netgear MP101	100	05.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Appealing price and offers a lot but the performance disappoints.						●			●
Opus Tech. Opus System	5740	UGHIFI/03	★★★★★	Fine sound from this fairly easy to install multi-room solution - tested with the Marantz DH9300.			●			●	●	●	●
Roku SoundBridge M1000	180	05.05/FT	★★★★★	Excellent performance and features - a class-leading network music player.				●	●	●			●
Sonneteer BardUSB	240	05.05/GT	★★★★★	Wirelessly sends music held on a computer to your hi-fi and doesn't forget good sound.			●			●			●

Apple AirPort Express

The AirPort Express is the winner of our first ever Technology Product of the Year Award. We honoured this innocuous little gadget because it's the missing link between your computer and your hi-fi. Play any MP3 file on your Wi-Fi-enabled computer and it's wirelessly transmitted to your hi-fi via AirPort – genius!

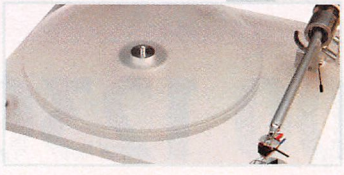
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004 PRODUCT OF THE YEAR TECHNOLOGY APPLE AIRPORT EXPRESS

Turntables

Turntables still offer fantastic sound quality and awesome value-for-money

BUDGET Up to £14000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	SPEEDS: 33 1/3 rpm	45 rpm	78rpm	Elec spd change	Man. operation	Auto operation	Semi-auto op.	Tonearm incl.	Cartridge incl.	Belt drive	Direct drive	Suspension	Finishes
Audio Note TT1/Arm 1/IQ1	900	11.01/ST	★★★★★	Product of the Year in the Awards 2003. Affordable, well built and sounds great.	●	●			●			●	●	●		●	Bk
Audio Note TT2+Arm 2+I/Q1	1417	08.01/FT	★★★★☆	You'll need the £2499 transformer, but you'll be rewarded with superb sound.	●	●			●			●	●	●		●	Bk
Audio Note TT2+Arm 2+IQ3	1600	05.03/GT	★★★★☆	Well engineered, versatile deck – sounds solid with any kind of recording.	●	●			●			●	●	●		●	Bk
Avid Diva package	1748	Awd.04	★★★★☆	Beautifully built and delivers composed, informative sound.	●	●		●	●			●	●	●		●	Bk
Avid Volvere	2000	08.01	★★★★☆	Tested with SME V arm/Dynavector D17 D2 II cartridge. Deserves your attention.	●	●			●					●		●	Sl
Bush MTT1	50	02.96/FT	★★★★★	Build quality is lacking but the mini-sized Bush manages to astound sonically.	●	●					●	●		●			Bk
Clearaudio Champion L1	1365	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	Combines stunning aesthetics with great sound - well worth an audition.	●	●			●			●	●	●			Acr
Clearaudio Emotion package	655	05.05/GT	★★★★★	Turntable Product of the Year in Awards 2004. Thrilling dynamics.	●	●			●			●	●	●			Ac



Clearaudio Emotion package

Our Turntable Product of the Year is truly a deck that deserves respect. Tested with the very capable Satisfy tonearm and Aurum Classics Wood cartridge, it's gorgeous to look at and feel - and it sounds even better. If you can live with the manual belt change, you'll have hours of musical pleasure to look forward to.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004 PRODUCT OF THE YEAR TURNTABLE CLEARAUDIO EMOTION

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

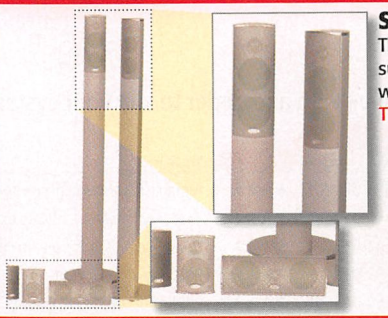
GLOSSARY
page 186

TEAC V377

CASSETTE DECK
This Teac has the quality of playback and recording one might expect of a cassette deck more than twice its price.
TSP £99.95 *1 Per Customer*

£50 OFF TSP
£49.95
3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £9.99

ELTAX SOVEREIGN



SPEAKER PACKAGE
Those masters of style and substance, Eltax, have done it again with this classy yet powerful set-up.
TSP £299.95 *1 per customer.*

£250 OFF TSP
£49.95
3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £19.95

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO A1

AMPLIFIER
"A bargain piece of hi-fi with a magic all of its own."
- WHAT HI-FI? S&V magazine.
TSP £99.95

£20 OFF TSP
£79.95
3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £9.99

YAMAHA RXV350

AMPLIFIER
"If you are putting together a starter separates home cinema system on a budget, this is the amp for you" - *What Home Cinema* magazine
TSP £199.95

£100 OFF TSP
£99.95
3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £19.95

KEF CRESTA 30

SPEAKERS
"Neat-looking cabinets… reasonable bass and midrange."
- WHAT HI-FI? S&V magazine.
TSP £199.95 *Stocks Erratic*

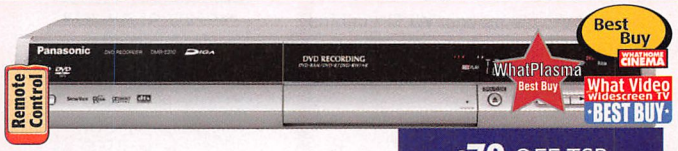
£20 OFF TSP
£99.95
PAIR | 3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £19.95

PIONEER DV575A

DVD PLAYER
"For outstanding all-round ability there are few players that can match Pioneer's DV-575A."
- WHAT HI-FI? S&V magazine.
TSP £149.95 *1 per customer*

£50 OFF TSP
£99.95
3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £19.95

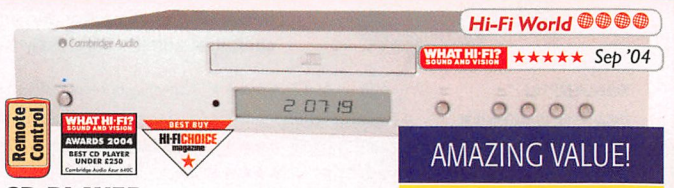
PANASONIC DMRES10



DVD RECORDER
MULTI-REGION
"Overall, the playback and recording quality… is very good… Panasonic's user interfaces are unparalelled" *What Video* magazine.TSP £239.95

£70 OFF TSP
£169.95
3YR SUPERCARE ONLY £29.95

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO AZUR 640C



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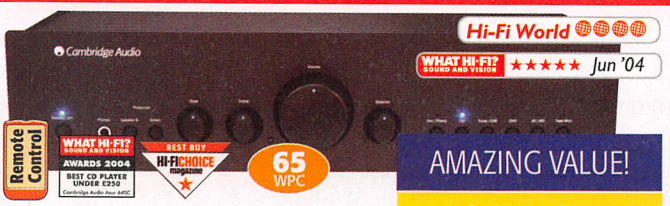

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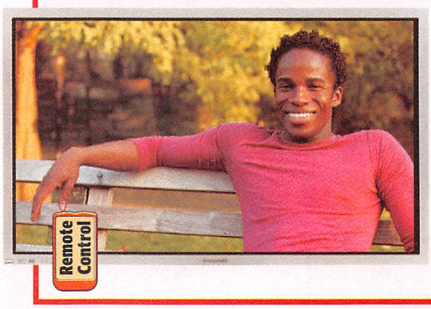

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VALID FROM 23RD AUGUST - 29TH SEPTEMBER

Turntables continued...

Turntables still offer fantastic sound quality and awesome value-for-money

BUDGET Up to £14000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	SPEEDS: 33 1/3 rpm	45 rpm	78 rpm	Elec spd change	Man. operation	Auto operation	Semi-auto op.	Tonearm incl.	Cartridge incl.	Belt drive	Direct drive	Suspension	Finishes
Clearaudio Evolution/Tangent	3185	05.00/FT	★★★★☆	Fashioned from transparent acrylic - supremely clear and crisp performance.	●					●		●	●	●			Acr
Clearaudio Master Ref/TQ-I	12610	08.01	★★★★★	For those who have the money and the desire this is one of the very best.	●	●			●			●	●	●			Acr
Goldring GR1/Elektra	140	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	Basic looks, but produces a lively, forward and engaging sound.	●	●			●			●	●	●			Bk
Goldring GR2	265	05.05/FT	★★★★★	Fine choice if you enjoy a detailed, rich and unhurried sounding delivery.	●	●			●			●	●	●			Bk
Linn Sondek LP12/Lingo	2300	Awd.94	★★★★★	Best turntable in Awards 1994 - has a warmth and faithfulness few can match.	●	●		●	●					●		●	5
Michell Gyrodec	1370	02.94	★★★★☆	An eye-catcher which performs at a level that is hard to beat at the price.	●	●			●			●		●		●	Sl
Michell Gyrodec SE	940	05.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Class-leading, few rivals get near its style or sound.	●	●			●					●		●	Sl
Michell Orbe SE	2116	06.01/GT	★★★★★	Big on bass, the Orbe combines striking looks with absolutely stunning sound.	●	●			●					●		●	Bk
Michell TecnoDec+HR pow sup	890	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Sounds wonderfully musical and impressively revealing, and is simple to set up.	●	●			●					●			Bk
Michell TecnoDec/Rega RB250	699	07.04/GT	★★★★☆	Without the HR power supply the TecnoDec becomes a more compelling buy.	●	●		●	●			●		●			Bk
Nottingham Analog. Anna Log	6451	08.97	★★★★★	30kg of cast iron and 17th-century timber - possibly the best turntable available.	●	●			●					●			Wd
Nottingham Analog. Interspace	587	06.96	★★★★★	Remarkable musicality and low cost (at least in high-end terms) make it a bargain.	●	●			●					●			Bk
Origin Live Aurora	970	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Tough setup, but a stellar performer with a wonderfully realistic presentation.	●	●		●	●					●			2
Origin Live Aurora Gold	1470	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	A great value deck that delivers a strong performance at a competitive price.	●	●		●	●					●		●	2
Origin Live Sovereign	3850	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Sublime - expensive but it sounds better than CD players anywhere near this price.	●	●		●	●			●		●		●	Bk
Pro-ject 1 Xpression	210	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Great-value deck and sounds remarkable.	●	●	●		●			●	●	●			Gry
Pro-ject 2 Xperience	550	05.05/GT	★★★★★	Laid-back and relaxed performer - ideal for longer-listening sessions.	●	●			●			●		●			Pers
Pro-ject Debut III Phono SB	180	07.05/FT	★★★★★	Award-winning turntable with a built-in phono stage - simple but effective.	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●			2
Pro-ject Debut III/Ortofon OM5E	130	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Best turntable under £250 in Awards 2004. Incredible value.	●	●	●		●			●	●	●			9
Pro-ject Perspective	750	07.04/GT	★★★★☆	An Impressive option, despite a lot of strong competition at this price-point.	●	●		●	●			●		●		●	Ac
Pro-ject RPM 4/Orto 510 Mk2	350	08.02/GT	★★★★☆	Very grown-up - conveys that lovely organic feel you get from great vinyl playback.	●	●	●		●			●	●	●			Bk
Pro-ject RPM 6 SB	500	12.03/FT	★★★★☆	An added speed box to the RPM 6 SB results in a fine-sounding, user-friendly deck.	●	●	●	●	●			●		●			Bk
Pro-ject RPM9X	1000	04.04/FT	★★★★☆	Very good and if you enjoy a big, bold performance, it's really exceptional.	●	●			●			●		●			2
Rega P2	198	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Impressive performer that sounds rather more expensive than actually it is.	●	●			●			●		●			Bk
Rega P3	298	08.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in Awards 2001. The finesse of decks that cost twice as much.	●	●			●			●		●			8
Reson Rota 1/Reson Reta/Etile	3100	05.00/FT	★★★★★	Terrific if you buy for your ears rather than your eyes - precise and punchy.	●				●			●	●	●			Ac
Roksan Radius 5 (wood)	750	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Solid performer that hardly puts a foot wrong. Deserves to be on the audition list.	●	●			●			●		●			3
Roksan Radius V/Nima arm	850	07.04/GT	★★★★★	An excellent deck - even more talented than the wood version we tested last year.	●	●			●			●		●		●	Ac
Roksan Xerxes X	1100	06.01	★★★★★	Great all-rounder, will please rockers and classical buffs with a fatigue-free listen.	●	●		●	●					●			2
Roksan Xerxes X (+DSU 1.5)	2000	02.04/GT	★★★★★	Stunning combination of resolution, build, dynamics and timing - still brilliant.	●	●		●	●			●	●	●			2
SME Model 20/2A	4713	09.96	★★★★☆	The precision makes it worth seeking out, but rockers may be tempted elsewhere.	●	●	●	●	●					●		●	Bk
Sound By Design Quasar LE/CG	3990	08.97	★★★★☆	An unusual approach to turntable design, but one which works really well.	●	●			●					●		●	Go
Technics SL1210 MK5G	550	05.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Bomb-proof DJ deck, but it loses out on a strictly sound-per-pound basis.	●	●		●	●			●	●		●		Gy
VPI HW-19 Junior	550	03.98/GT	★★★★★	A truly involving listen and peerless at this price. Includes a Rega RB300 arm.	●	●			●			●		●			Bk
Wilson Benesch The Full Circle	2100	02.04/GT	★★★★★	Best turntable over £1000 in Awards 2004. A sound that digs up plenty of detail.	●	●			●			●	●	●			

Tuners & portable radios

Take your pick from digital, analogue or hybrid tuners

BUDGET Up to £2500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	BANDS: DAB	FM	MW	LW	SW	Presets	Auto tune	RDS	Remote	Finishes
Acoustic Solutions Portal 2 (port)	80	08.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Looks pretty but the sound is only average.		●				6				Sl
Acoustic Solutions SP111	100	02.04/FT	★★★★☆	If you can't afford to spend more on a hybrid tuner, this is an attractive option.	●	●				4	●	●	●	Sl
Alba TRDAB2820 (portable)	50	02.05/GT	★★★★☆	Cracking build quality coupled with good connectivity and sound.	●	●				10	●			Wt

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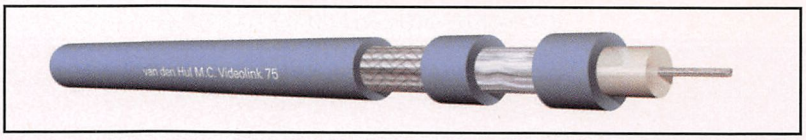

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RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

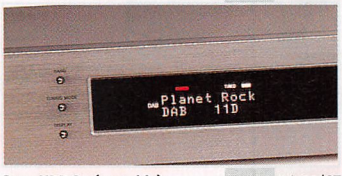
GLOSSARY
page 186

Tuners & portable radios continued...

Take your pick from digital, analogue or hybrid tuners

BUDGET Up to £2500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	BANDS DAB	FM	MW	LW	SW	Presets	Auto tune	RDS	Remote	Finishes
Arcam DiVA DT91	450	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	All virtue and no vice, a no-brainer for Arcam fans, but it comes at a hefty price.	●	●				16	●		●	Sl
Arcam DiVA T61	230	10.02/FT	★★★★☆	Fine tuner with a smooth and generous sound. But it faces tough competition.		●	●			30	●	●		2
Aria A-2000 (portable)	140	12.04/GT	★★★★☆	A decent radio that scores well for its connections, style and simplicity of use.	●	●				6	●	●	●	2
Boston Recepter Radio (port)	130	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	A high-quality clock radio which delivers surprising bass depth, well worth an audition.		●	●			20				3
BT Aviator (portable)	130	06.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Good features including 10 min record facility - but the sound doesn't inspire.	●	●				10				Bk/Sl
Bush DABCR2003 (portable)	70	01.04/GT	★★★★★	Bargain if you like to fall asleep to - and be woken by digital-only radio stations.	●					10	●			Sl
Bush PSDAB2003 (handheld)	100	07.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Cheap and decent personal with sporting appeal, but it can't match the best..	●					10				Blu
Bush TR2003DAB (portable)	100	01.04/GT	★★★★☆	A uniquely-styled radio which produces the goods sonically - we love the looks.	●	●				10	●			Sl
Cambridge Audio Azur 640T	200	Awd.04	★★★★☆	Decent piece of kit to top off the Azur range - bold and expressive performance.	●	●				10	●	●	●	2
Cambridge Audio DAB300	120	05.03/FT	★★★★★	No-nonsense digital tuner that's both a fine performer and a great-value buy.	●					10	●			2
Cambridge Audio DAB500	150	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Fine sound quality with good bass and crisp treble.	●					10	●		●	2
Creek T50	550	03.04/FT	★★★★☆	Fine-sounding FM tuner, if a little pricey. Best with a sizeable external aerial.		●	●	●		64	●	●		Sl
Cyrus FM X	500	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	One for the FM radio purist. A stripped-down spec, but capable of superb sound.		●				29	●			2
Densen Beat B-800	850	04.04/FT	★★★★★	Best analogue tuner in Awards 2004. This no-frills Danish tuner sounds superlative.		●				99				2
Hitachi TRK100DAB (portable)	75	06.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Poor digital performance so unless FM is more important save yourself sonic strife.	●	●				10	●			Wt
Intempo KT-01 (portable)	80	06.05/GT	★★★★★	Tough, available in various colours and sonically capable.	●	●				8	●			3
Intempo PG-01 (portable)	90	01.04/GT	★★★★☆	Good for the money with stereo sound. Worth considering, but is mains only.	●	●				4	●			Wd
Linn Pekin	650	10.01	★★★★★	The laidback sound is easy on the ear, but detail and dynamics remain plentiful.		●	●			80	●		●	Bk
Matsui DA-1	60	02.05/FT	★★★★☆	Cost-effective, painless and useful - could be the perfect DAB tuner for many.	●					10	●		●	Sl
Min of Snd MOSDR011	150	01.04/GT	★★★★☆	Stylish handheld unit that plays music pretty persuasively and is involving with speech.	●					10	●			Sl
Morphy Richards Ordio (port)	150	06.05/GT	★☆☆☆☆	Comes with good software - but the sound is poor, memory small and the price too high.	●	●				12				Gry/Blu
NAD C422	190	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Works well enough and sounds good for the money. A no-nonsense option.		●	●			30		●	●	2
Naim NAT05	825	10.01	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. The NAT05 proves radio still has the power to amaze.		●				99	●			Bk
Nevada ND-01 (handheld)	80	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Pocket sized and the sound quality is good - excellent value for money.	●	●				12				Sl
Panasonic RF-B55 (portable)	119	07.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Worldband tuner promises plenty, but doesn't satisfy. Frustratingly dull look and feel.		●	●	●	●	54	●			Bk
Panasonic RF-D1 (portable)	99	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	Retro look might not suit all, but it is easy to use and the sound is reasonable.	●	●				20	●			Sl
Perstel BlueNote (handheld)	100	01.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Very small, and looks impressive at first, but seems less so once you've used it.	●					0	●			Bk
Philips DA1000 (handheld)	150	07.04/GT	★★★★★	A tidy and compact personal DAB tuner with a very good level of performance.	●	●				20				Sl
Pure Digital DRX-701ES	190	10.02/FT	★★★★★	Product of the Year in the Awards 2002. A quality home tuner for digital radio.	●					99	●		●	2
Pure Digital DRX-702ES	250	07.03/FT	★★★★★	Product of the Year in the Awards 2003. Delivers digital and analogue in style.	●	●	●			99	●		●	2
Pure Digital Elan(portable)	80	02.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Sound lacks weight and punch and it feels cheap - a major disappointment.	●	●				16	●			Al
Pure Digital Evoke-1 XT (port)	100	10.04/FT	★★★★★	Best portable radio in Awards 2004. Great value.	●					6	●			2
Pure Digital Evoke-2 (portable)	150	01.04/GT	★★★★★	The stereo version of the Evoke-1 makes a fine buy, being flexible and sweet-sounding.	●	●				12	●			Wd
Pure Digital Pocket DAB1000	110	01.04/GT	★★★★★	This go-anywhere personal companion has the sound quality to live up to its style.	●					10	●			Sl
Pure Digital Pocket DAB2000	200	09.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Disappointing - feels cheap and sounds characterless.	●	●				55				Sl
Pure Digital Sonus-1 XT (port)	120	06.05/GT	★★★★★	The sound, the build quality, and the fact that it talks to you makes this a winner.	●					10	●			Wd
Pure Digital Tempus-1 (portable)	100	01.04/GT	★★★★☆	An Evoke-1 with a touch sensitive snooze handle for improved bedside manner.	●					10	●			Wd
Pure Digital The Bug (portable)	130	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Not class-leading sound but its ability to pause and rewind radio is tempting.	●					6	●			2
Roberts Gemini 1 (portable)	200	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	Great performer in all areas, but the price tag is just too hefty to entirely justify.	●	●				12				Sl
Roberts Gemini 6 (portable)	180	07.04/FT	★★★★★	Solid-sounding and easy to use with a well-designed remote: will grace any household.	●	●				10	●	●	●	Wd
Roberts Gemini 8 (portable)	140	02.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Handy features but it's cheap to the touch, and cost too much.	●	●				5	●	●		Bwn
Roberts Gemini 9 (mains)	120	09.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Fair as a clock radio but it's left floundering by more conventional DAB kit.	●	●				10	●	●		Sl
Roberts Gemini RD-11 (port)	140	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Well-equipped, sounds great and is good value. Records for 40 minutes too.	●	●				10		●		Wd/Lth
Roberts R9965 (portable)	80	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Delivers a deep, sturdy performance in keeping with its quirky bomb-proof design.		●	●	●		0				Gry
Roberts R9988 (handheld)	50	07.04/FT	★★★★★	No-nonsense portable analogue radio that offers supreme performance for the cash.		●	●	●		0				Gry
Roberts RD-4 (handheld)	160	06.04/FT	★★★★☆	Bulkier than some of the competition, but it's a superb performer nevertheless.	●					10				Sl
Sony ICF-M410L (portable)	50	07.04/FT	★★★★★	A no-nonsense radio, ideal for the bedroom, featuring great sound and style.		●	●	●		20				Sl
Sony ICF-SW100e	180	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Classy and unusual worldband tuner which packs a lot into a neat leather carrying case.		●	●	●	●	50	●			Bk
Sony SRF-M10 (handheld)	65	07.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Ultra-small and stylish with some handy facilities, but sonically it fails to deliver.		●				0				Sl
Sony ST-SDB900	250	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Tuner Product of the Year in Awards 2004. Excellent hybrid digital/analogue tuner.	●	●	●			129	●	●	●	Sl



Sony ST-SDB900

Tuner Product of the Year in Awards 2004. In the realm of radio we've never had it so good, thanks to Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) and the multitude of channels on offer. The Sony ST-SDB900 is a great performer for the money, and definitely the pick of the current crop of DAB tuners at, and around, this price.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2004
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
TUNER
SONY ST-SDB900

Sony XDR-S1 (portable)	150	06.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Stylish but sadly it's not quite as appealing to live with.	●	●	●	●		40	●		●	Gry
T+A T1210R	900	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	Solid premium-priced performer that will appeal to FM-only radio fans.		●						●		2
TEAC T-1D	200	06.03/FT	★★★★☆	Ideal companion for the C-1D CD player and the A-1D amplifier.		●	●			30	●	●		Sl
TEAC T-H300DAB	200	10.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Fine match for TEAC's Reference Series, though the sound quality isn't special.	●	●	●			30	●	●	●	Sl
Tivoli iPAL	139	02.05/GT	★★★★★	Plug your iPod into this new version of the Award-winning radio for great sound.		●	●			0				Wt
Tivoli Model 3	200	02.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Analogue clock radio - it looks gorgeous and sounds good, but at £200 it's expensive.		●	●			0				Wd
Tivoli Model One	100	07.04/FT	★★★★★	It may only be mono, but this is a lovely little radio that looks and sounds great.		●	●			0				5
Tivoli PAL (portable)	130	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Excellent performance from this sexy portable radio.		●	●			0				8
Xfm Digital Radio (portable)	130	02.05/GT	★★★★☆	Great styling, sound and plenty of useful features - just a bit pricey.	●	●				10	●			Wt

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

GLOSSARY
page 186

£1,000,000 THX, KEF, CELESTION,

HYPERFI *The Hi Fi Superstore* **www.hyperfi.co.uk**

1/2 PRICE PIONEER AV RECEIVER DEALS

Pioneer VSX-C402

Also Silver Finish £129

1/2 PRICE

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ NOV 04

save £150

WAS £249.99

"Cinematic quality surround sound is within your reach, with Pioneer's VSX-402 A/V receiver. Almost identical spec to the VSX-C502 but with 5.1output." **What Hi-Fi? Sound&Vision Nov 04**

5x 75watts • DD • DTS • DPL11 • RDS Tuner • 4x Digital Audio Inputs • 3x Digital Video Inputs • Pre-Amp Out • Remote • Black Finish

Matching DVD £Unprintable

£99.99

Pioneer VSX-D514

save £150

1/2 PRICE

Also Silver Finish £129

WAS £249.99

"Exciting multi-channel surround sound with high performance audio" **Pioneer Dec 04**

2x 100watts Stereo • 5x 80watts 5.1 • DD • DTS • Large Speaker Terminals • 3 audio 3 A/v RCA Inputs • Pre Amp Out • RDS Tuner • Pro Black Finish • Remote Control

£99.99

HOME CINEMA CHOICE ★★★★★ CELESTION C STYLE SERIES AV PACKAGE MEGA DEAL!

Celestion C Style Series AV Package

1/5 PRICE

save £1200

2x C1 100w Fronts, 2x C1 100w Rears, 1x C4c 150w Centre & 1x C6s 100w RMS Subwoofer

"Alan Rayner of Home Cinema Choice finds that all too rare combination of style and performance in this impressive series of home theatre speakers from Celestion. The C1's do sound very good, while C4c has a monopod foot to raise and lower the angle of the centre speaker relative to those listening and the subwoofer is gorgeous. The shape is a triangle perfectly proportioned to the rest of the speakers and will shake your home at near subsonic levels."

HOME CINEMA CHOICE *** Best Buy**

Deluxe Video Grey Finish

HOME CINEMA CHOICE BEST BUY SPEAKERS

Also New Sealed Carton £399

WAS £1499.99

£299.99 Ex display model

1/15 PRICE ★★★★★ BEST BUY HOME CINEMA AV SPEAKERS

Celestion Centre 2

1/15 PRICE

save £140

"Centre speaker with a well-balanced sound and plenty of definition and bite. With two 90mm mid/bass drivers flanking Celestion's 14mm tweaker, the 75watt Centre 2 reproduces dialogue with unerring clarity and realism." **What Hi-Fi? Sound&Vision • VTV3**

Deluxe Video Grey Finish

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★☆

Also CSC Black £49

WAS £149.99

£9.99

Celestion C4c CentreSpeaker

1/6 PRICE

save £250

"The C4c has a monopod foot to raise and lower the angle of the centre speaker relative to those listening. It is triangle shaped with perfect proportions."

HOME CINEMA CHOICE ***
Best Buy**

Deluxe Silver Finish • Bstk

Also New Sealed Carton £99

HOME CINEMA CHOICE BEST BUY SPEAKERS

WAS £299.99

£49.99 Ex display model

Celestion C1 Front Speakers

1/3 PRICE

save £200

"The sides of the C1's are actually coated aluminium extrusions, massively assisting rigidity and they do sound very good. They are triangle shaped with elegant style."

HOME CINEMA CHOICE ***
Best Buy**

Deluxe Video Grey Finish • Bstk

WAS £299.99

£99.99

Also C2 Was £699 **Now £199**
C3 Was £999 **Now £299**

Celestion C5r Rear Dipoles

1/2 PRICE

save £150

"The C5r dipole rears are tiny and look like they just couldn't perform – but they do. They are small and wedgy so will look very good on your wall."

HOME CINEMA CHOICE ***
Best Buy**

Deluxe Video Grey Finish • Bstk

HOME CINEMA CHOICE BEST BUY SPEAKERS

WAS £299.99

£149.99

Celestion C6s Subwoofer

save £450

1/4 PRICE

"The C6s subwoofer is gorgeous, and dead clever with it. It is triangle shaped and is fitted with a 12 inch subwoofer driver that will shake your home at near subsonic levels. Bstk

HOME CINEMA CHOICE *** Best Buy**

100 Watts RMS • Frequency & Gain Controls • Deluxe Video Grey Finish

Also New Sealed Carton £199

HOME CINEMA CHOICE BEST BUY SPEAKERS

WAS £599.99

£149.99 Ex display model

1/8 PRICE CELESTION 300 AV RECEIVER & DVD MEGA DEAL!

Celestion 300 AV Receiver & DVD Separates

1/8 PRICE

save £700

"Fantastic, rich picture with bright, strong colours and no digital artefacts… a lot of effort seems to have been put into the audio." **Ultimate DVD No.44**

AVR-300 AV Receiver • 5x 45w or 2x 60w (8 ohms RMS) • AM/FM RDS Tuner 40 Presets • DD • DPL2 • DTS • DSP • 6x Inputs • Sub Pre-Out System Remote

DVD-300 DVD Player • Plays DVD, CD, CD-R, CD-RW, S-VCD, VCD, VCD and MP3 Progressive Scan Output

Parental Lock

Also AVP-100 Matching 5.1 AV Speaker Kit 1/2 Price £99

Also B Grade Boxed £299

WAS £799.99

£99.99 Ex display model

1/10 PRICE ★★★★★ KEF, REFERENCE & THX HOME CINEMA AV SPEAKERS

Kef Coda Centre

1/10 PRICE

save £90

"The Coda C is a perfectly timbre-matched entry level centre speaker. Twin 100mm bass & 25mm Ferro fluid-cooled tweeter".

KEF Audio Oct99

Freq Res 60Hz-20kHz • Mag Shielded • 75watt • 90db Sensitivity • Black Finish

Also Black Ash £19
Beech £29 CSC Black £49
New Sealed Carton

WAS £99.99

£9.99 Ex display model

KEF Cresta

1/5 PRICE

save £120

Also Cherry Finish

"The Cresta 2 way AV Speaker features KEF's superb new 25mm metal dome tweeter, flanked by a pair of powerful 100mm bass/mid drivers. Smooth, warm and natural sounding." **KEF Audio Oct 05**

75w Handling • 8 Ohm • 91db Sensitivity • Mag Shielded • Can be very effectively used in singles, pairs right up to seven AV speaker combinations

Deluxe Black Ash

Also 2x Coda 80 £49
3x Coda 80 £69
5x Coda 80 £109
7x Coda 80 £149
Save £900

WAS £149.99

£29.99 EACH

Kef Reference Model 200c

1/3 PRICE

WAS £699.99

save £500

"For those interested in the ultimate home theatre solution, the 200c provides a formidable option. With 4th generation Uni-Q technology giving crystal clear reproduction over a large area, the 200c is particularly well suited to Dolby Digital applications." **KEF Audio Nov 04**

200w Handling • 3 Way 4 Driver Infinite Baffle System • 90db Sensitivity

Also New Sealed Carton
1/2 Price £349

£199.99 Ex display model

Kef KHT2005

1/2 PRICE

WAS £799.99

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★

save £500

"Product of the Year in the WHAT HI*FI? Awards. Best sub/sat you can buy under £1000."

What Hi-Fi? Sound&Vision Jun 01

Superb 6 Speaker AV Package • 5x 100 Watt Satellite Speakers • Plus 150 Watt Power Sub

Superb Quality Black Finish • NoMO

Also New Sealed Carton £499

£299.99 Ex display model

Kef Reference THX TDM45B

1/2 PRICE

save £500

WAS £799.99

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★

Also New Sealed Carton £499

"The 300w internal amp and 15 inch driver of the TDM45B active sub promises plenty of low end reinforcement. The KEF Reference THX subwoofer is one of the best we've heard, at any price."

What Hi-Fi? Sound&Vision Feb 99

455x455x567mm • Deluxe Black Ash Finish

£299.99 Ex display model

HYPERFI

www.hyperfi.co.uk

The Technics Hi Fi Superstore

Next to Barking Station

PANASONIC DMR-E55

1/3 PRICE

save £200

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ JUN 04

"Digital DVD Recorder Product of the Year WHF Awards 2004. As good as it gets for the money; the DRM-E55 is a star; great DVD-RAM compatibility." **What Hi-Fi? Sound&Vision Jun 04**

Records DVD-R/RW + DVD-RAM MP3 Playback * Remote

Also DMR-E55 A Grade Boxed £149
DMR-E85 A Grade Boxed £249

WAS £299.99

£99.99 Ex display model

MISSION & PIONEER STOCK LIQUIDATION

HYPERFI *The Hi Fi Superstore* **www.hyperfi.co.uk**

1/3 PRICE WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ MISSION MEGA DEALS

Mission m50

Also Black Ash Real Wood Veneer New Sealed Carton **£99**

1/3 PRICE

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ OCT 02

~~WAS £139.99~~

save £130

"this little gem of a speaker with remarkably detailed and spacious detailing." **Mission Mar 05**

Stylish Black Speakers • Fully Shielded • Audiophile Grade X-over • 100w Handling • 8 Ohms • 86db Sensitivity

£69.99 Ex display model

Mission m7ds

save £270

1/4 PRICE

"The Mission m7ds offers a high definition bipolar surround speaker in an elegant package." **Mission May 04**

100watt Output • Twin Keraform Bass/Mid Drivers • Twin 25mm Silk Dome Tweeters Superb Black Veneer

Also m7ds Silver **£119**

~~WAS £349.99~~

£79.99 Ex display model

Mission m7s

~~WAS £399.99~~

1/2 PRICE

"The sound from the m7s is as dramatic and beautiful as it looks" **Mission Loudspeakers Mar 05**

Stylish 6 Speaker AV Package • Fully Shielded 5x 100w Satellite Speakers • 100w Super Power Subwoofer 88db Sensitivity • 8 Ohms • Superb Anthracite Finish

Also Matching Stands **£49** New Sealed Cartons **£299**

save £200

£199.99 Ex display model

1/20 PRICE WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ A/V & HI FI MEGADEALS

Kef THX Speaker Stand

~~WAS £199.99~~

1/20 PRICE

WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ FEB 99

Also New Sealed Carton **£29**

save £190

"Superb quality speaker stands to match the TDM23 or many other speakers. Sand fillable". **What Hi-Fi? Sound&Vision Feb99** B stock

£9.99 EACH

Celestion E0.5

Also New Sealed Cartons **£59**

1/3 PRICE

save £110

~~WAS £149.99~~

"A small speaker with a big heart, the 70w E0.5 crams all the sophistication of the E Series into a compact package." **Celestion Consumer Division Mar 03**

19mm Titanium Dome Tweeter • 130mm Long Throw Bass Driver • Superb Rosewood Finish • Magnetically Shielded

£39.99 Ex display model

KEF KHT-2005 Eggs

1/2 PRICE

WHAT HI-FI? Awards 2001 BEST BUY

save £50

Also New Sealed Carton **£69**

~~WAS £99.99~~

"Product of the Year WHAT HI*FI Awards" Superb 100watt Satellite Speakers • Stylish Egg Shaped Speakers that will match with any AV setup • Professional Charcoal Finish

£49.99 Ex display model EACH

Yamaha YST-SW015

1/4 PRICE

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ FEB 02

'Good looking and can thump some serious bass." **What Hi-Fi? Sound&Vision Feb 02**

100watt Dynamic Power • 30-200Hz Low Frequency Response • 160mm Super Bass Driver • Auto Standby

Also YST-SW015 Grade A Boxed 120watt **£99**

save £150

~~WAS £199.99~~

£49.99 Ex display model

Pioneer CTS-250

save £80

1/2 PRICE

Also New Sealed Carton **£99**

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★☆ AUG 97

~~WAS £149.99~~

"This is a well-made and sensibly priced cassette deck, that is capable of good results. There's a ready market for affordable, good-sounding recorders like this £150 Pioneer." **What Hi-Fi? Sound&Vision Aug 97**

Still Part of Pioneers 2004 Model Range... it must be good Dolby B/C • Anti Vibration Chassis • Music Skip/Search Flucrescent Display * Digital Counter

£69.99 Ex display model

Celestion E3

Also New Sealed Cartons **£99**

1/4 PRICE

save £230

" A superb floorstanding speaker , the 125w E3 is Bi-wireable, magnetically shielded and is constructed of heavy duty MDF to eliminate cabinet colorations." **Celestion Consumer Division Mar 03**

25mm Titanium Dome Tweeter • 170mm Long Throw Bass Driver • Superb Rosewood Finish

~~WAS £299.99~~

£69.99 Ex display model

Pioneer DV-575A

1/3 PRICE

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ JAN 04

save £180

Also DV575 **£99** DV565 Pro Black **£119** DV575 Pro Black **£129** New Sealed Carton

~~WAS £249.99~~

"Product of the Year in the Awards 2003. Cracking universal player." **What Hi-Fi? Sound&Vision Jan 04**

Superb DVD Player • MP3 • DVD-R/-RW • S Video Out RGB Out • Slimline Silver Finish • Remote Control

£69.99 Ex display model

Mission m70as

Also New Sealed Carton **£149**

1/3 PRICE

"Superbly engineered 100watt power sub that thumps serious bass." **Mission UK Dec 04**

100watt Powered Subwoofer Amplifier • 38-150Hz Low Frequency Response • 250mm Super Bass Driver Fully Magnetically Shielded • Line level Input

save £170

~~WAS £249.99~~

£79.99 Ex display model

Tannoy Revolution R2

1/4 PRICE

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★☆ AUG 99

"the Tannoy R2s are heavy speakers, cabinet mass-loaded, solidly built and have a lovely real wood veneer. Tonally the Tannoys are smooth and full, giving them a weight that escapes lesser rivals." **What Hi-Fi? Sound&Vision Aug 99**

150watts Handling • Sensitivity 88db • 920x170x235mm • Black Ash

save £300

Also Black Ash Real Wood Veneer New Sealed Carton **£149**

~~WAS £399.99~~

£99.99 Ex display model

Celestion AVP-100

save £400

1/5 PRICE

Also Bstock Boxed **£149**

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★☆ FEB 98

~~WAS £499.99~~

"The Celestion little 1's add more than their fare share of sound to the movie excitement." **What Hi-Fi? Sound&Vision**

Superb Compact 6 Speaker Cinema package • 4x 50Watt Front Speakers • 1x 50Watt Centre Speaker • 1x S8 100 Watts Powered Subwoofer • Magnetic Shielding

£99.99 Ex display model

Yamaha RX-V650

Also New Sealed Carton **£249** Titanium **£299**

1/2 PRICE

save £290

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ NOV 04

~~WAS £459.99~~

"The RX-V650 showcases the latest seven-channel capability for various surround sound formats including DD-EX and DTS-ES. The performance is very good and easily lives up to Yamaha's fine recent form. The RX-V650 offers a detailed and weighty balance." **What Hi-Fi? Sound&Vision Nov 04**

7x 95watts Output • RDS Tuner 40 Presets • DPL11x Pro Black Finish • Remote Control

£169.99 Ex display model

Toshiba 26WL46B

1/2 PRICE

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ SEP 04

"Great buy 26 inch LCD flat screen TV – spectacular performer and very well equipped." **What Hi-Fi? Sound&Vision**

Superb Slimline Silver Finish Remote Control

~~WAS £1299.99~~

Also 27WL46 A Grade **£599**

save £700

£499.99 Ex display model

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T742 5x50w	Was £399	**Now £199**
T752 5x80w	Was £599	**Now £249**
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T762 6x100w	Was £999	**Now £349**
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810c Centre	Was £129	**Now £19**
820c Centre	Was £149	**Now £29**
820 Front	Was £199	**Now £49**
800sw Sub	Was £249	**Now £99**
KEF Speakers		
Coda 70 Bookshelf	Was £149	**Now £29**
Cresta 3 Floorstand	Was £249	**Now £69**
PSW1000 Sub	Was £299	**Now £99**
TDM23c THX Centre	Was £399	**Now £199**
PSW3000 Sub	Was £599	**Now £199**
Model 30B Sub	Was £799	**Now £299**

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~~WAS £99.99~~

£19.99 Ex display model

NN-K153 Grill	Was £89	**Now £29**
NN-K123 Silver Grill	Was £99	**Now £39**
NN-T552 900w	Was £119	**Now £49**
NN-V653 900w 1.3Kw Quartz Grill	Was £129	**Now £49**
NN-V673 Silver 900w 1.3Kw Quartz Grill	Was £189	**Now £59**
NN-A554 Compact Dim 4	Was £159	**Now £69**
NN-A574 Dim 4	Was £199	**Now £69**
NN-A774 Dim 4	Was £239	**Now £79**
NN-A883 Dim 4	Was £249	**Now £99**

Hundreds of others please phone

Panasonic TX-28PM11

~~WAS £524.99~~

1/2 PRICE

"Clear, realistic picture; excellent detail and contrast. At the £525 it's a steal." **What Hi-Fi? Sound&Vision Aug 04**

28" Widescreen TV • RGB Scart • Composite in • S-Video in Phono in/out • Remote • Slimline Silver Finish

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ AUG 04

save £325

£199.99 Ex display model

Panasonic		
TX-15AT	Was £199	**Now £79**
TX-28DTX1	Was £749	**Now £249**
TX-32DTX10	Was £949	**Now £299**
TX-32DTX10	Was £899	**Now £399**
TX-32PD30	Was £999	**Now £399**
TX-32DTX40	Was £999	**Now £399**
TX-32PD50	Was £1399	**Now £499**
TX-36PD50	Was £1649	**Now £599**
Sony		
KV-28HX15	Was £649	**Now £199**
KV-28CS70	Was £499	**Now £249**
KD-28DL11	Was £549	**Now £269**
KLV-17HR LCD	Was £799	**Now £299**
KD-28DX200	Was £949	**Now £299**
KV-32FX68	Was £1199	**Now £299**
KV-32FQ86	Was £999	**Now £399**
KD-32DX51	Was £899	**Now £449**
KD-32DX200	Was £999	**Now £499**
KV-36HQ100	Was £1999	**Now £799**
Toshiba		
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32-W33	Was £599	**Now £249**
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32-WL48	Was £1999	**Now £899**

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Ex display

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Arcam Diva CD93 CD Player (Black & Silver).....979.90...750.00
AVI Lab Series CD CD Player .....1400.00 .1150.00
Classé CD Player .....2950.00 .2350.00
Quad 99 CD-P Upsampling CD/DAC.....1000.00...749.00
Wadia 301 CD CD Player /Digital Pre (Silver) ... 3650.00 .2750.00
Wadia 861 CD CD Player /Digital Pre (Black) ....7950.00 .6350.00

Amplifiers

Arcam FMJ A32 Amplifier (Silver)..... 1199.90...950.00
Classé CA201 Power Amplifier .....3195.00 .2500.00
Cyrus Q Power Power Amplifier (Black).....500.00...380.00
Samuel Johnston PPA100 Power Amplifier .....2585.00 .1450.00
Meridian G51 Stereo Receiver .....1995.00 .1596.00
Quad 99 Pre & Power.....1299.98 .1000.00

Tuners

Arcam T61 FM /AM Radio(Silver)..... 229.90...179.00
Cyrus FMX FM Tuner (Black).....500.00...400.00

Loudspeakers

Dynaudio Audience 42W Wall Mount Speakers.....500.00...350.00
Dynaudio Audience 52SE Speakers.....950.00...825.00
Dynaudio Audience 72SE Speakers .....1750.00 .1550.00
Cyrus CLS70 Loudspeakers .....850.00...600.00
Mission 782SE Loudspeakers .....899.90...750.00
Mission Elegante ....POA
Quad 12 Loudspeakers (Birdseye Maple).....499.95...425.00

DVD Players

Cyrus DVD8 DVD Player (Silver).....1200.00...950.00
Denon DVD-A1 DVD Audio/Video Player .....2499.99 .1249.99
Harman Kardon DVD 2550S DVD Player(Silver) ....350.00...250.00
Harman Kardon DVD 506 LE DVD Player(Silver)....350.00...250.00
Pioneer DVD656 DVD/DVD-A/SACD (Silver) .....399.00...185.00
Pioneer DVD 747 DVD/DVD-A/SACD (Silver).....950.00...500.00

AV Amplifiers, Receivers & Processors

Denon AVC-A11SR A/V Amplifier (Gold) .....1799.99...999.99
Denon AVC-A1SR A/V Amplifier (Gold) .....2999.99 .1999.99
Harman Kardon AVR 4550 A/V Amplifier (Black)...800.00...575.00

Audio Visual Loudspeakers

Mission V6c Centre (Cherry) .....199.90...150.00

Mains Conditioning

Isotek The Qube 2K 2 Way mains conditioner ...1495.00 .1150.00

Home Cinema Projectors

Sim2 HT200 DLP Projector 4700.00. 2000.00
Yamaha LPX500 LCD Projector.....3300.00 .2500.00

Secondhand

Classe CAP151 Integrated Amp .....2195.00 .1200.00
Seleco SDV-100 DLP Projector 1200.00
Meridian 588 CD Player .....2100.00 .1100.00
Meridian M33 Active Speakers .....1560.00...850.00

Cyrus 7 Integrated Amplifier New Boxed NOW 350.00
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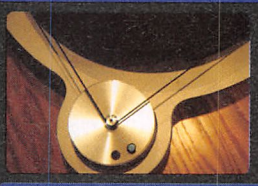

Ex display

CD Players / CD-R Recorders / Hard Disc Recorders

Quad 99 CD CD Player .....650.00...485.00
Quad 99 CD-P Upsampling CD/DAC.....1000.00...749.00
Yamaha CDR-HD1300 mk2 CD Recorder HDD .....600.00...499.00

Amplifiers

Cyrus Pre X Preamplifier (Silver) .....1000.00...745.00
Meridian G51 Stereo Receiver .....1995.00 .1596.00

Loudspeakers

Dynaudio Audience 42 Rosewood..... 400.00...350.00
Dynaudio Audience 52SE Speakers.....950.00...825.00
Castle Harlech S2 (Maple) Floorstanding.....1000.00...699.00
Castle Howard S3 (Cherry) Floorstanding .....1350.00...949.00
Meridian DSP5000 Mk2 (Rosewood)Digital Active 4540.00 .3750.00
Mission Elegante ....POA
Rega Alya Floorstanding Loudspeaker (Cherry) ...525.00...325.00

Subwoofers

REL Q400 Subwoofer (Maple).....1100.00...749.00

Turntables

Project RPM 4 Turntable (Black/Silver) .....325.00...245.00

Televisions

Loewe Aconda 40 LS + C31 Stand 40" Widescreen 1950.00
Loewe Aventos 3981ZP P 32" Widescreen CRT ...1340.00...999.00

DVD Players

Arcam DV 88 DVD Player (Silver) .....1000.00...549.00
Cyrus DVD 7 Upgradeable DVD Player (Silver) ...1000.00...649.00
Harman/Kardon DVD 21 DVD Player.....250.00...175.00
Harman/Kardon DVD 2550S DVD Player.....350.00...249.00
Harman/Kardon DVD 30 DVD Audio.....450.00...345.00
Meridian G91DH DVD Audio AV Controller .....3895.00 .3116.00
Pioneer DV-656A DVD Audio Player (Black) .....530.00...400.00
Yamaha DVD-S550 (boxed) ..... 130.00...109.00

AV Amplifiers, Receivers & Processors

Arcam AVR 200 DD/DTS AV Receiver (Black) .....800.00...449.00
Cyrus AV8 DD/DTS AV Processor (Silver) .....1100.00...850.00
Denon ADV-1000 DD/DTS AV Receiver /DVD .....700.00...449.00
Denon AVR 3802 DD/DTS AV Receiver (Black) .....850.00...499.00
Denon AVR 1602 AV Receiver (Black) .....350.00...199.00
Harman/Kardon AVR 5500 DD/DTS AV Receiver....750.00...395.00
Harman/Kardon AVR 5550 DD/DTS AV Receiver....900.00...699.00
Harman/Kardon AVR 130 DD/DTS AV Receiver .....350.00...279.00
Harman/Kardon AVR 230 DD/DTS AV Receiver .....500.00...399.00
Harman/Kardon AVR 430 DD/DTS AV Receiver .....800.00...639.00
Harman/Kardon AVR 630 DD/DTS AV Receiver....1000.00...749.00
Meridian G68ADV Surround Controller.....4995.00 .3996.00
Rotel RB 985 Mk 2 5 Channel Power Amplifier .....700.00...450.00
Yamaha DVD-S550 (boxed) ..... 130.00...109.00

Audio Visual Loudspeakers

Mission M5ds (black/boxed)..... 200.00...149.00
Mission M7ds (black+silver/boxed)..... 180.00...139.00

Home Cinema Projectors

Sim2 Domino 20 DLP Projector (Black) .....3750.00 .2700.00

Secondhand

Cyrus Pre X Preamplifier (silver) 595.00

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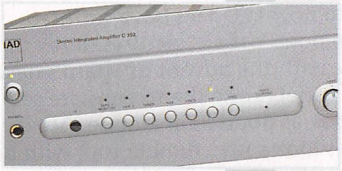
Integrated amplifiers/receivers

One-box powerhouses to drive your speakers – with or without tuners

BUDGET Up to £500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Int amp	Receiver	Power out (w)	Line level in	MM phono	MC phono	Tape loops	Preamp out	Speakers	Tone controls	Headphone	Remote	Finishes
Acoustic Solutions SP101	80	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	If your budget is really tight this product would be a good first step.	●		35	5	●		1	●	1	●	●		Sl
Arcam DiVA A65 Plus	400	07.03/ST	★★★★☆	Still a fine buy, just doesn't dominate the budget market any more.	●		40	4	●		1	●	1	●	●	●	Sl
Audio Analogue Primo Settanta	475	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Tidy amp with exquisite vocal delivery and tuneful bass.	●		70	5			1		1			●	Sl
Cambridge Audio A5	120	07.01/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Rich, powerful with weight and insight.	●		60	5			1		1	●			2
Cambridge Audio Azur 540A	200	08.05/GT	★★★★★	Ideal building-block on which to build a fantastic budget system.	●		50	5			2		2	●	●	●	2
Cambridge Audio Azur 640A	250	06.04/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo amplifier under £250 in Awards 2004. Fine dynamics.	●		65	5			2		2	●	●	●	2
Denon DRA-455	200	08.01/FT	★★★★★	Good value and it sounds great. Even the phono stage is acceptable.		●	52	2	●		1		2	●	●	●	Bk
Denon PMA-255UK	140	02.02/GT	★★★★☆	Exciting amp for your money - care is needed with system matching.	●		30	4			1		1	●	●		Bk
Denon PMA-355UK	230	12.02/GT	★★★☆☆	Had a good run but has met its match with the sub £300 amps now.	●		50	3			2		2	●	●	●	Bk
Focal-JMlab iCUB	450	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Hybrid amplifier/sub - add speakers and an MP3 player for hi-fi playback.	●		75	1			0		1			●	Bk
Marantz PM4400OSE	250	Awd.03	★★★☆☆	Decent performance, for those in search of a calming experience.	●		30	3	●		2		2	●	●	●	2
Marantz PM7200	330	06.04/GT	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. The Marantz is still a strong contender.	●		95	4	●		2	●	2	●	●	●	2
Marantz PM7200 KI	500	05.05/GT	★★★★☆	Well-equipped and sounds refined - best for classical or vocal-based music.	●		95	4	●		2		2	●	●	●	2
Marantz SR4320	250	06.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Unusual beast but for all its merits it is an ultimately uninspring performer.		●	80	7	●		1	●	2		●	●	2
Myryad Z140	500	05.03/ST	★★★★☆	The Z140 will appeal to vinyl-lovers, but it needs punchy partnering kit.	●		50	4	●		2		1		●	●	2
NAD C320BEE	220	02.04/GT	★★★★★	Product of the Year in the Awards 2002. High-quality, big sounding amp.	●		50	5			2	●	1	●	●	●	2
NAD C352CT	350	06.04/FT	★★★★★	Stereo amplifier Product of the Year in Awards 2004.	●		80	5			2	●	1	●	●	●	2



NAD C352CT

We first tested this amplifier in its original C352 guise and weren't very impressed with the lack of coherence and grip to the bass. NAD reworked the amp's bottom end for the C352CT, creating this year's stereo amplifier Product of the Year. It's stunning value, with a majestic sound you have no right to for this kind of money.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
STEREO AMPLIFIER
NAD C352CT

NAD C372	500	05.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Real disappointment - lacks detail, dynamics and finesse.	●		150	5			2	●	2	●	●	●	Bk
Pioneer A-209R	150	04.02/ST	★★★☆☆	Solid-enough for the money, but rivals offer more for a similar price.	●		35	3	●		2		2	●	●	●	Bk
Rega Brio	328	06.04/GT	★★★★☆	Not an amplifier for everyone, but in the right circumstances it'll shine.	●		38	3	●		1		1				2
Rotel RA-01	250	06.04/GT	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Great build and exciting presentation.	●		40	4	●		1	●	2	●	●		Sl
Rotel RA-02	380	09.04/GT	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Cracking amp, powerful and vibrant sound.	●		40	4	●		1	●	2	●	●	●	2
Rotel RA-03	500	05.05/GT	★★★★★	Superb all-round performer that works well with a wide range of systems.	●		70	5	●		1	●	1	●	●	●	Sl
TEAC A-ID	280	06.03/FT	★★★★☆	Makes sense when viewed as a companion for the C-1D CD player.	●		50	5	●		2		1	●	●	●	Sl

BUDGET £501 and over

Arcam DiVA A80	630	10.03/FT	★★★★☆	Incisive and musical presentation, beautiful build and slick looks.	●		65	5	●		1	●	1		●	●	Sl
Arcam DiVA A90	850	10.04/ST	★★★☆☆	Flexible and warm but ultimately, this amplifier sounds anonymous.	●		90	5			2	●	1	●	●	●	2
Arcam FMJ A32	1200	07.02/ST	★★★★☆	The FMJ A32 is a flexible product with good sound and masses of features.	●		100	5			2	●	2	●	●	●	2
Audio Analog. Maestro Settanta	1750	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	Worth considering: the sound is entertaining and the build is superb.	●		70	5			1	●	1			●	Sl
Audio Analog. Puccini Settanta	950	09.05/ST	★★★★☆	Top of the class when it comes to looks. Muscular, powerful sound, too.	●		70	4	●	●	1		2			●	Sl
Audio Note Oto SE	1600	07.02/ST	★★★★☆	Partner sensibly and this Audio Note amplifier will please like little else.	●		10	4			1						Bk
Audio Note Soro SE	2600	12.02/FT	★★★★☆	Blows valve stereotypes of excess warmth and soggy bass into the weeds.	●		20	4			1		1				Bk
Audionet SAM V2	2400	07.02/FT	★★★★☆	Impressive - it isn't flawless, but its strengths are considerable.	●		110	5			1	●	1				2
AVI Laboratory Series	1499	11.03/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo amplifier £1400-£3000 in Awards 2004. Digs deep.	●		200	6			1	●	1			●	Bk
Chord Elect. CPM2600 (+ Int legs)	3535	04.03/FT	★★★★☆	Fine amp - few rivals can match its power, speed and resolution.	●		120	6			2	●	1			●	Sl
Creek 5350SE	850	04.03/GT	★★★★☆	Good rather than great product - definitely worth a listen though.	●		85	4			2		2		●	●	Al
Creek A50iR	550	07.03/FT	★★★★☆	Very good amp for the money - combines simplicity and performance.	●		50	4			1		1			●	Sl
Cyrus 6vs	650	05.05/GT	★★★★☆	Super entry-level amp – if you're a Cyrus fan, you'll love it.	●		40	6			1	●	1			●	2
Cyrus 8vs	850	10.04/ST	★★★★★	Best stereo amplifier £800-£1400 in Awards 2004. Swoonly good.	●		70	6			1	●	2		●	●	2
Cyrus 8vs/PSX-R	1250	09.05/ST	★★★★★	Strapping on a PSX-R to the 8vs takes the sound quality to new heights.	●		70	6			1	●	2		●	●	2
Denon PMA-SA1	5500	09.05/GT	★★★★☆	Pair with DCD-SA1 CD player and the right speakers for gorgeous sound.	●		50	8	●		2		1				Sl
Eclipse TD A502	875	10.04/ST	★★★★★	Looks like nothing else - one of the best options in this price range.	●		30	1			0		1				Sl
Electrocompaniet EC1-3	1000	10.04/ST	★★★★☆	Competitive - warm, even-handed sound and remarkable soundstage.	●		75	5			1	●	1			●	Bk
Exposure 2010s	599	05.05/GT	★★★★☆	For good, honest musical fun this makes a lot of sense. A fine amp.	●		75	5			1	●	1			●	2
Exposure 3010	1000	09.05/ST	★★★★☆	A good performer with a rich and creamy sound.	●		100	5			1	●	1			●	Sl
GRAAF GM50 (valve)	3950	08.04/FT	★★★★★	Fantastic - good enough to put other similarly priced amps to shame.	●		50	4			2		1			●	Bk
Krell KAV-400xi	2698	03.04/FT	★★★★★	Accomplished all-rounder with power, refinement and good build.	●		200	4			1	●	1			●	2
Marantz PM-17 MkII M KI	1500	12.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Elegant appearance and a pleasant sound but it isn't an all-round star.	●		60	4	●	●	2	●	1	●	●	●	Gd
Moon I-3	1595	03.05/GT	★★★★☆	Strong performer with a distinctive sound that's easy-going.	●		100	6			0	●	2			●	Bk
Myryad MXI2080	1000	09.05/ST	★★★★★	Beneath the sombre exterior lies a remarkable amp.	●		80	5			1	●	1			●	2
Myryad MXI2150	1700	03.05/FT	★★★★★	Look past its appearance because it sounds absolutely lovely.	●		150	6			2		1			●	2
Naim Nait 5i	699	04.04/GT	★★★★★	Relentlessly musical with real verve - compatible with other brands.	●		50	4			1		1			●	Bk
Onkyo A-1VL	1100	10.04/ST	★★☆☆☆	Digital amplifier - a tiring and tiresome listen.	●		100	5	●		1	●	1			●	Sl
Orelle SA100evo	1200	09.05/ST	★★★★☆	Incredibly insightful amplifier – deserves an audition.	●		80	5			1	●	1			●	Sl
Pathos Classic One	1325	02.04/FT	★★★★☆	Valve/transistor hybrid that looks stunning - worth seeking out.	●		70	4			1		1			●	Bk
Pathos Logos (valve)	2750	11.03/FT	★★★★★	Looks magnificent and sounds even better - brilliant engineering.	●		110	5			1		1			●	Gry
Primare I21	750	08.05/GT	★★★★★	With the Primare CD21 the sound is natural with a wide soundstage.	●		75	4			1	●	1			●	2
Primare I30	1500	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Primare has hit the bullseye - this is a fabulous amp for the money.	●		100	6				●	1			●	2
Pro-ject Pre Box/Power Box	800	04.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Pre/power amp combo - not bad, but integrated rivals perform better.	●		65	4			1	●	1				Bk

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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GLOSSARY
page 186

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All shops are closed on Sundays and Mondays

FOCUS RANGE

Think of anything Danish and you'll immediately think pastry or bacon... but one company aims to change that... Dynaudio. Arguably the hi-fi world's premiere loudspeaker brand, they are just about to re-enforce that with the all new Focus range.

These are just starting to arrive in our stores, and if the ones we've heard already are anything to go by then this is going to be their most successful range to date.

The range starts with the Focus 110 for £899 and includes the Focus 222 floorstanders and a centre channel. Available in a range of stylish finishes including Maple, Cherry, Rosewood and Black Ash from your local Audio T and Audio Excellence Dynaudio stockist.

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- And more...

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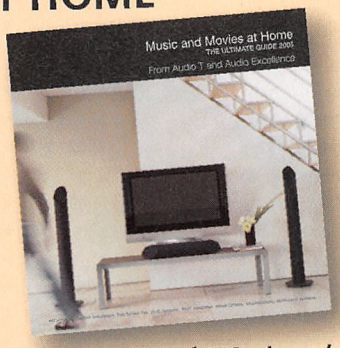
SHARP

Sharp LCD Screens

Up to now LCD TV's have suffered from poor 'off air' pictures. But now, with the advent of Sharp's new PAL panel range the screens are set to look as good as analogue TV. Prices look set to tumble too, with a 26"screen now just £699.

MUSIC AND MOVIES AT HOME



The 2005 edition of ***"Music and Movies at Home – the Ultimate Guide"*** is waiting in store for you now. It's been completely revamped with a new name and new look. To get your FREE copy call in at your local store or

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We give independent advice, excellent deals and a level of service that keeps our customers returning year after year.

Offers valid until end of October 2005 (unless otherwise stated). Some products not available at all stores. Please call before travelling.

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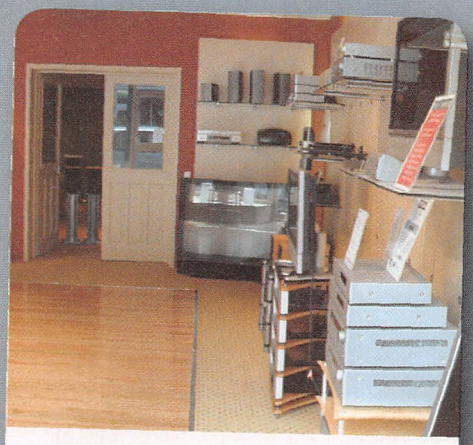

We are proud to say that our PORTSMOUTH store has just finished a complete refurbishment. The store now boasts two new demonstration rooms with state of the art projection and multi channel sound systems.

Tivoli Audio

NEW

Some of the world's smartest analogue radios, have gone digital! Yep, we've now got stocks of the new Tivoli Model DAB... it combines the stylish looks you'd expect from Tivoli with the clarity of sound you'll only get with Digital and it only costs £229 for the mono version or £299 for stereo.

This is what Stuff Magazine had to say about it *"When it comes to making stylish radios, Tivoli has cornered the market. This is its first DAB model, and about time, too. It costs more than similar radios but who cares when it looks and sounds so good. Every home should have one."*

PRICE PROMISE

WE KNOW YOU WON'T FIND BETTER SERVICE.

WE KNOW YOU WON'T FIND BETTER SOUND.

BUT IF YOU FIND A BETTER DEAL FROM ANOTHER AUTHORISED SHOP, LET US KNOW AND AS LONG AS WE CAN VERIFY IT WE'LL BE HAPPY TO MATCH IT.

NEW

KEF

Following on from the well received Q series comes iQ. Yes, we can hardly wait for happy customers flocking in to ask what our iQ is! Modelled on the older Q series that is where the similarity ends.

This new range packs a huge punch from the iQ1 stand mounts to the iQ9 3 way floor standers, there are also surrounds and centres to match.

Available in the usual foray of finishes (black, apple, maple and walnut) and with a starting price of £229.99 they are available from most Audio T and Audio Excellence stores now...

NEW

Focal.JMlab

the Spirit of Sound

A complete new loudspeaker range from Focal... a company that's number one in France! Although famous for the hand made Utopia range, in fact all Focal models feature drive units and cabinets that are custom made by Focal themselves, giving them far greater flexibility in the design process. We think the results speak for themselves - see if you agree.

CYRUS 6 Amplifier black/silver
WAS £600 NOW **£420** SAVE **£180**

CYRUS 6 Amplifier brushed black
WAS £650 NOW **£455** SAVE **£195**

CYRUS CD6 CD player silver
WAS £600 NOW **£420** SAVE **£180**

CYRUS DVD6 DVD player black/silver
WAS £750 NOW **£525** SAVE **£225**

CYRUS DVD8 DVD player black/silver
WAS £1,200 NOW **£840** SAVE **£360**

demonstration models

CYRUS

Advanced Audio and Video Systems

ONKYO

SCR205DAB SYSTEM

Comprises: A905 Amplifier, T405DAB Tuner and C705 CD Player

now just £399.00

was £499.00 (excluding speakers)

Offers valid until end of October 2005 (unless otherwise stated). Some products not available at all stores. Please call before travelling.

Integrated amplifiers/receivers continued...

One-box powerhouses to drive your speakers – with or without tuners

BUDGET £501 and over

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Int amp	Receiver	Power out (w)	Line level in	MM phono	MC phono	Tape loops	Preamp out	Speakers	Tone controls	Headphone	Remote	Finishes
Red Rose Model 5 (valve)	7999	06.03/FT	★★★★★	Produces one of the most seductive sounds we've heard in ages.	●		45	5			1		1			●	Sl
Rega Mira 3	598	05.03/ST	★★★★	We love the looks but it sounds bland alongside the class leaders.	●		61	4	●		1	●	1				2
Roksan Caspian M series-1	1000	09.05/ST	★★★★★	Solid performer that's still capable of mixing it with the class-leaders.	●		70	5			1	●	1			●	Sl
Roksan Kandy MkIII	650	05.05/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo amplifier £500-£800 in Awards 2004 - but now looking pricey.	●		120	5	●		1	●	1		●	●	6
Sugden A21a	1049	04.03/GT	★★★★★	We love this hot-running machine, when well matched it'll sing.	●		25	4	●	●	1	●	1				Sl
Sugden Masterclass	3150	06.02/FT	★★★★★	Stonking performer, excellent combined with the Masterclass CD player.	●		33	3	●		1	●	2				Sl
T+A V10 (valve)	4000	01.05/FT	★★★★★	Very fine performer that's capable of a pleasing slice of sonic heaven.	●		80	5			1		1			●	Sl
Unison Research S2K (valve)	1475	04.02/FT	★★★★★	Offers fine build and subtle sound wrapped in a distinctive package.	●		15	4			1		1			●	Wd
Unison Research Unico line	900	10.04/ST	★★★★★	Refined, but not prissy - an amplifier of rare ability.	●		80	4			2	●	2			●	Gry
Unison Research Unico SE	1325	09.05/ST	★★★★★	Amazing when it comes to vocals - it's just a shame about the price.	●		140	4	●	●	1		2			●	Sl

Preamps

The control section of the amp – team with a power amp or active loudspeakers

BUDGET Up to £1000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	INPUTS: Line Level	INPUTS: MM phono	INPUTS: MC phono	OUTPUTS: Tape loops	OUTPUTS: No of outputs	OUTPUTS: Balanced out	OUTPUTS: Tone Controls	OUTPUTS: Headphone	OUTPUTS: Remote	Finishes
Audio Analogue Bellini Remote	625	11.02	★★★★★	An elegant and refined three-box combo - 2xDonizetti monoblocs with the Bellini.	●	●		1	2				●	Gry
Cyrus PreXvs	1000	01.05/FT	★★★★★	Detailed, agile and dynamic performer that is easy to upgrade.	●			1	2			●	●	2
Linn Kolektor	575	07.02	★★★★★	The LK85/Kolektor combo backs up impressive flexibility with solid sound performance.	●	●		1	3		●	●	●	Bk
Myryad MXP2000	1000	07.04	★★★★★	Tested with the MXA2150 power amp - the only shortcomings were with this preamp.	●			1	2				●	2
Naim NAC 112x	705	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Strong combination with the NAP 150x power amp - a hugely enjoyable listen.	●			3	1				●	Bk
Parasound Halo P3	700	11.02	★★★★	It's certainly talented, but the Halo P3/A23 power combo lacks some excitement.	●	●		1	2	●	●	●	●	Sl
Quad 99	750	03.05/GT	★★★★★	The 99/909 combo is a class performer that'll perform superbly in a wide range of systems.	●	●		1	1		●		●	Sl
Rotel RC1070	395	08.01	★★★★	The pair RB1070/RB1080 is best suited those who want rate power over subtlety.	●	●		2	2		●	●	●	Bk
Sugden Headmaster	659	06.01	★★★★★	Headphone amp/preamp - a great niche product that sounds brilliant. Was £599.	●			1	3			●		Gry

BUDGET £1001 and over

Audia Flight	4500	07.05/FT	★★★★★	Expensive but teamed with the Flight 50 power amp it will satisfy for years to come.	●			0	2	●			●	2
Audio Note M2-phono	2000	05.01/FT	★★★★★	The M2 and the P4 power amp combinations is capable of breathtaking sonic feats.	●	●		1	4					Bk
Audio Research SP16	2499	08.02/FT	★★★★★	Great sound from the entry-level combo of SP16/VS55 but the finish is isn't good.	●	●		1					●	Sl
Audionet Pre 1 G2	2100	09.04/GT	★★★★★	Not cheap but combined with Amp 1 power amp its sonic performance justifies the price.	●			1	2	●			●	2
Audiopax Model 5	3899	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Great-sounding preamp - just slightly let down by poor attention to build.										
Chord Elect. CPA 4000 Enhan.	7615	05.01	★★★★★	Use with the SPM 1200E amp - they belong right at the forefront of high-end amplification.	●			2	3	●		●	●	Sl
Cyrus DACXP	2200	09.05/FT	★★★★★	DAC with a preamp built in, paired with the X Power - works fabulously.	●			0	4	●				2
DNM Reson 3C Primus	2100	05.01/FT	★★★★★	Superlative resolution, dynamics and timing - excellent phono stage. Tested with PA3.	●			1	1	●				Bk
EAR/Yoshino 864	1850	Awd.01	★★★★★	Gutsy but involving valve-amp, when used with 861 power, is something special.	●	●		0	5	●				Sl
Linn Exotik	1750	09.04/GT	★★★★	Combine with the 2250 power amp for great looks and feel - sonic abilities fall short.	●			1	8				●	2
Moon P-3	2850	Awd.01	★★★★★	Beautifully built, the P-3/W-3 combination puts long-term listenability before attack.	●			1	2	●			●	2
Naim NAC 202	1455	07.03/FT	★★★★★	Naim's pairing of this preamp with the NAP200 power amp is very tempting indeed.	●			3	1				●	Bk
Naim NAC 282	2945	09.04/GT	★★★★★	Delivers a music buzz that few rivals can match - paired with the NAP 200 and Hi-Cap.	●			3	1				●	Bk
Primare Pre30	1200	01.03	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. With A30.2 has a powerful, warm, generous sound.	●			1	3	●			●	Bk
Roksan Caspian M-series	1250	09.04/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo amplifier £1400-£3000 in Awards 2004 with two Caspian M-series monoblocs.	●	●		1	3					Sl
Usher P-307A	1250	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Paired with the R1.5 power amp this is impressive.	●	●		1	2					2

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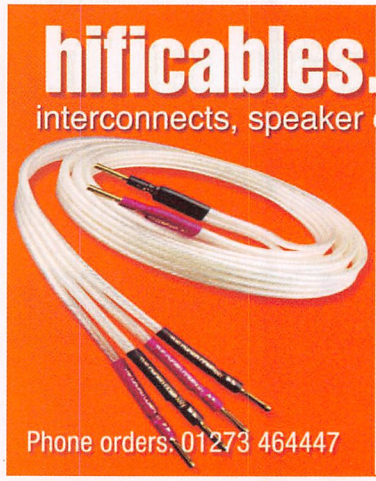

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★★★ Average
★★ Below par
★ Poor

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Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

GLOSSARY
page 186

Power amps

Supplies the music muscle to the loudspeakers – just add a pre-amp

BUDGET Up to £800

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Stereo	Mono	Power (w)	Bridgeable	Phono in	XLR in	Finishes
Audio Analogue Donizetti Mono	525	11.02/GT	★★★☆☆	Elegant and refined three-box combo - 2 x this monobloc plus the Bellini preamp.		●	100		●		Gry
Linn LK85	545	07.02/ST	★★★★☆	The LK85/Kolektor combo backs up impressive flexibility with solid sound performance.	●		62		●		Bk
Naim NAP 150x	795	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Strong combination with the NAC 112x preamp - hugely enjoyable.	●		50				Bk
Parasound Halo A23	750	11.02/GT	★★★☆☆	It's certainly talented, but the Halo P3/A23 power combo lacks some excitement.	●		125	●	●	●	Sl
Quad 99 Stereo	550	11.02/GT	★★★★★	Detail, speed, muscularity, authority and dynamics - 99 pre/power combo has the lot.	●		85		●		Sl
Roksan Caspian M series	750	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Brainstorming power amp - brings moribund recordings to life.	●		70	●	●		2

BUDGET £801 and over

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Stereo	Mono	Power (w)	Bridgeable	Phono in	XLR in	Finishes
Arcam FMJ P1	1100	09.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Two P1s fail to deliver excitement when combined with the C30 preamp (now discontinued).		●	180		●		2
Arcam FMJ P7	2600	05.03/GT	★★★★★	The P7 sounds huge and paired with the AV8 processor the combo is simply stunning.	●		7x150		●		2
Audia Flight 50	4500	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Expensive but teamed with the Flight pre-amp it will satisfy for years to come.	●		50		●	●	2
Audionet Amp 1	3150	04.04/FT	★★★★★	Not cheap but combined with the Pre 1G2 preamp the sonic performance justifies the price.	●		200			●	Bl
Chord Electronics SPM 1200E	5765	05.01/FT	★★★★★	The CPA 4000 preamp and this 1200E belong at the forefront of high-end amplification.	●		350		●	●	Sl
Chord Electronics SPM 600	2330	07.99/FT	★★★★★	Used with CPA 2200 preamp, the Chords are hard to beat - excel in detail retrieval.	●		130		●	●	Sl
Cyrus Mono X	1200	08.03/FT	★★★★★	The original PreX with MonoX is capable of breathtaking speed and detail resolution.		●	150		●	●	2
Cyrus X Power	1000	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Paired with the DACXP with preamp built in, the X Power works fabulously.	●		70	●	●	●	2
DNM PA3	1900	05.01/FT	★★★★★	Superlative resolution, dynamics and timing. Tested with the Reson 3C Primus preamp.	●		40			●	Bk
EAR/Yoshino 861	3980	Awd.01	★★★★★	Gutsy but involving valve-amp; used with 864 preamp, it's something rather special.	●		32	●	●	●	Sl
Krell FPB-400CX	11997	01.03/FT	★★★★★	Paired with the CD/preamp this FPB 400cx has sky-high ability to match its stellar price.	●		400			●	Bk
Linn LK140	875	03.00/GT	★★★★☆	Much to like about the LK140, tested with a Wakonda(now deleted).	●		95		●		Bk
Moon W-3	3450	Awd.01	★★★★☆	Beautifully built, the P-3/W-3 combination puts long-term listenability before attack.	●		120	●	●	●	2
Myryad MXA2150	1500	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	This power amp is a real gem, the MXP2000 pre we combined it with lost it the star.	●		150				2
Myryad MXA7150/MXD6000	5900	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Sombre looking but the 7150 amp with the MXD6000 processor is a top-class performer.			7x150				SL
Naim NAP 200	1385	07.03/FT	★★★★★	Naim's pairing of this power amp with the NAC202 preamp is very tempting indeed.	●		70				Bk
Naim NAP 200 (with NAC 282)	4215	09.04/GT	★★★★☆	Delivers a music buzz that few rivals can match - paired with the NAC 282 and Hi-Cap.	●		70		●		Bk
Parasound Halo A52	1700	11.03/FT	★★★★☆	It's not cheap, but this is an excellent piece of kit with fine sound and huge appeal.	●		5x125	●	●	●	Sl
Primare A30.2	1200	01.03/FT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. With the Pre30 it has a powerful, generous sound.	●		120	●	●	●	Bk
Primare A30.5 MkII	1700	05.03/ST	★★★★☆	Good all-rounder with the SP31.7 processor but it lacks the last word in sheer brute force.	●		5x120		●		Bk
Quad 909	900	03.05/GT	★★★★★	Used with the 99 preamp this is a class performer. Will suit a wide range of systems.	●		140		●		Sl

Quad 909

Another excellent product from the legendary British hi-fi company Quad, the 909 is a solid, compact power amplifier that delivers an outstandingly neutral tonal balance and presentation. In other words, it gets out of the way and lets your music do the talking... which is just how we think it ought to be.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION BEST IN CLASS

Roksan Caspian M-series Mono	1100	09.04/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo amp over £3000 Awards 2004. Two of these with the Caspian M-series preamp.		●	100				Sl
Rotel RB-1090	1745	07.00/GT	★★★★☆	Goes as loud as anyone could want, but it's not the most subtle (tested at £1650).	●		380		●	●	Bk
Rotel RB1080 (THX)	845	08.01/ST	★★★☆☆	The solid pair of RB1070/RB1080 is best suited to those who place power over subtlety.	●		200		●	●	Bk
Rotel RMB1075 (THX)	845	05.03/ST	★★★★★	Stunning combined with the RSP1066 processor. Impressive in stereo and with movies.	●		120x5		●		Bk
Usher R1.5	1450	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Paired with the P-307A preamp the R1.5 is the star - lovely organic sound.	●		103	●	●	●	1
Yamaha MX-D1	3000	03.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Packed with clever technology, but musically it's a disappointment.	●		500		●	●	Bk

Phono & headphone amps

Make your amp turntable-friendly and get the best from your headphones

BUDGET Up to £1000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Headphone	Phono amp	Moving magnet	Moving coil	Adj cart loading	Line level intputs	Remote	Finishes
Audio Analogue Aria	495	02.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Nicely built and cleverly engineered, but the sound isn't good enough to worry the best.			●	●	●			Sl
Bellari VP 129	180	05.05/FT	★★★★☆	Likeable, flexible phono stage - audio circuitry is valve powered and it has a headphone output.		●	●					Red
Cambridge Audio Azur 540P	40	02.05/FT	★★★★★	Musical and involving - another exemplary Azur product.		●	●			0		2
Clearaudio Basic Symmetry	540	02.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Certainly a decent performer, but it lacks the sonic sparkle to shine at this price point.		●		●	●			Sl
Creek OBH-21	150	04.04/GT	★★★★★	Excellent composure and finesse for the money, though you may prefer an amp with more bass.	●					1		Sl
Creek OBH-21SE	250	05.03/FT	★★★★★	An amp that sounds absolutely gorgeous with an appropriate source and set of headphones.	●					1		Sl
Ergo Amp 1	169	04.04/GT	★★★★☆	With deep bass and good pace it creates a truly thrilling listen, but there's no room for let up.	●							Bk
Graham Slee Era Gld MkV/PSU1	460	02.04/GT	★★★★★	Limited features, but it sounds wonderful. Skills usually only found only at twice the price.		●	●			0		Sl
Graham Slee Era Gld V/Elev EXP	970	Awd.04	★★★★★	This two-box combination is one of the best phono stages we've ever heard.		●	●	●	●	0		Sl
Graham Slee Gram Amp 1	85	04.01/GT	★★★★★	Superbly fluid and open presentation - we can't imagine anyone not liking this little star.		●	●			0		Bk
Graham Slee Gram Amp 2	125	06.02/FT	★★★★★	Great-value phono stage that will make a considerable upgrade from most in-built models.		●	●			0		Bk
Graham Slee Solo/PSU1	460	10.04/FT	★★★★★	Superb all-rounder that gets to the music's heart - deserves good headphones.	●					2		Sl
Linn Linto	995	09.97	★★★★☆	Vinyl fans will love this phono stage - it'll breathe new life into your old records.		●	●	●	●	0		Bk
Musical Fidelity X-CAN v3	250	04.04/GT	★★★★☆	With good headphones, offers sweet treble that works wonderfully well with classical pieces.	●					1		Sl
NAD PP2	50	08.03/FT	★★★★☆	Solid, likeable performer that really makes sense in the budget systems of vinyl lovers.		●	●	●		0		Gr
Pro-ject Head Box	150	04.04/GT	★★★★☆	Champion when it comes to connectivity but it's a little out-boxed on purely sonic terms.	●					2		Bk
Pro-ject Phono Box	45	04.01/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2000. Works wonderfully - brings out the best in sub-£300 turntables.		●	●	●		0		Bk
Pro-ject Phono Box SE	125	08.02/FT	★★★★★	Fine development of the original, ideally suited to use with a wide variety of turntables.		●	●	●	●	0		Bk

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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GLOSSARY
page 186

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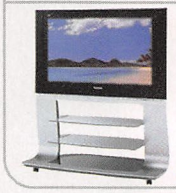

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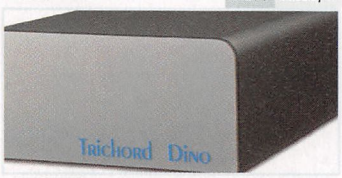
BUDGET Up to £1000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Headphone	Phono amp	Moving magnet	Moving coil	Adj cart loading	Line level inputs	Remote	Finishes
Pro-ject Tube Box	300	12.03/FT	★★★★★	A valve phono stage that sounds excellent with a wide range of music.		●	●	●	●	0		Bk
Roksan Caspian	650	Awd.01	★★★★☆	Fine phonostage that performs well on all counts, but has many cheaper rivals to fight off.		●	●	●	●	0		Sl
Roksan Caspian M Phono SE	1000	02.04/GT	★★★★★	A massively talented performer that'll deliver a refined and detailed sound in the right system.		●	●	●	●	0		Sl
Trichord Dino	299	06.01/FT	★★★★★	Best phono stage in Awards 2004. A slice of high-end performance at a very competitive price.		●	●	●		0		Bk



Trichord Dino

Trichord saw a gap in the phono market and launched the superb Dino to fill it. Cutting costs without losing quality is tricky, but Trichord managed it with some grace. Overall the Dino manages to unearths all kinds of detail and then perform the tricky task of assembling it all into a coherent and enjoyable whole – magic!

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004
BEST PHONO STAGE
Trichord Dino

Speakers

From floorstanders to standmounters to all-in-one active monitors

BUDGET Up to £500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Standmounts	Floorstanders	Sensitivity (db/w/m)	Impedance (ohm)	Max power handling (w)	Biwirable	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Finishes
Acoustic Energy Aegis Compact	110	07.01/GT	★★★☆☆	Compact in name and style - the lack of dynamics makes them a little lifeless.	●		88	8	100		26x16x14	2
Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo 3	350	02.05/ST	★★★★☆	Remain among our favourite floorstanders at the price - still worth a listen.		●	90	8	150	●	88x22x19	3
Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo One	180	12.04/GT	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2002 in their prime, but newer rivals have caught up.	●		89	8	100	●	36x19x24	3
Acoustic Energy Aego 2 (sub/sat)	100	04.01/FT	★★★★★	Stereo sub/sat package for PCs and consoles but fine in a hi-fi set-up.	●		-	-	A85		3 units	2
Acoustic Energy Aelite Two	450	07.05/GT	★★★★☆	These large standmounts promise an enjoyable long-term experience.	●		90	6	175	●	45x23x30	3
Arcam Alto	400	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Startling dynamic ability and warm sound. Designed to match Solo system.	●		85	8	100	●	26x14x24	2
ATC SCM7	499	04.03/ST	★★★★★	Reach remarkable levels of performance - they're class in a half-pint glass.	●		84	8	300	●	30.16.21	Ch
Audiovector K1	320	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	If you want a good pair of ultra-small speakers give these a listen.	●		87	4	100		26x14x22	6
Audiovector K1 Super	420	09.05/FT	★★★★☆	Fun, versatile and surprisingly dynamic. Ideal for small rooms.	●		87	4	120	●	26x14x22	6
AVI Neutron IV	500	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Terrific if you want compact speakers, but don't want to sacrifice performance.	●		87	8	150		27x14x21	3
B&W DM303	180	09.02/ST	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Now fail to match the latest competition.	●		88	8	100		33.20.24	2
B&W DM600 S3	200	08.03/ST	★★★★☆	Fantastic-looking but relaxed bass means they work best in a 5.1 system.	●		88	8	100		29x18x22	3
B&W DM601 S3	250	03.02/ST	★★★★★	Stunning speakers - evolutionary improvements on their predecessors.	●		88	8	100	●	37.20.23	3
B&W DM602 S3	300	02.05/ST	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Their appeal hasn't diminished over the years.	●		90	8	120	●	49x24x29	2
B&W DM602.5 S3	400	05.02/ST	★★★★☆	Extremely well-built entry-level speakers but they can lack bass power.		●	88	8	100	●	85x20x29	3
Castle Richmond 3i	320	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Immensely likeable speakers that are worth a serious listen.	●		88.5	8	75		33x17x23	8
Cyrus CLS50	450	09.01	★★★★☆	Fabulous in most areas, but are let down by below-par bass performance.	●		86	8	100	●	25.18.27	3
DALI Concept 2	249	02.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Excel in inoffensiveness but fall short when it comes to excitement levels.	●		87	8	120		39x20x26	2
DALI Concept 6	399	07.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Have many strengths, but not talented enough to worry the class leaders.		●	91	8	150		93x20x26	2
Dynaudio Audience 42	400	05.04/ST	★★★★☆	Provide a very enjoyable listen at the price, so meriting a serious audition.	●		86	4	150		28x17x25	4
Eltax Liberty 3+	149	01.01/ST	★★★★☆	Not the most even-handed, but they are still great-sounding speakers.	●		87	6	80	●	38x21x34	2
Eltax Monitor III	129	06.00/GT	★★★★★	Compact, cohesive-sounding and strong on rhythm - a great-value buy.	●		89	6	90	●	30x19x23	2
Energy Connoisseur C3	400	05.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Well made stylish speakers with good timing and rhythm but brash treble.	●		92	8	125		39x20x29	2
Epos ELS3	200	12.04/GT	★★★★☆	Speedy and rhythmic but lack reach at either end of the frequency range.	●		87	4	100		27x18x20	3
Epos M12.2	450	07.05/GT	★★★★★	It doesn't matter what kind of music you like, these speakers do it all.	●		87	8	120	●	38x20x25	3
Epos M5	349	02.05/ST	★★★★★	Trustworthy speakers with a list of talents as long as your arm.	●		87	4	100	●	33x17x21	3
Focal-JMlab Chorus 706s	309	01.04/FT	★★★★☆	Offer an impressively sophisticated sound for a very reasonable price.	●		90	8	80	●	37x22x25	3
Focal-JMlab Chorus 707s	399	02.05/ST	★★★★☆	Imposing in many ways - audition if your tastes run to the forceful.	●		92	8	110	●	49x24x30	3

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
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BACK ISSUES
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GLOSSARY
page 186

Speakers continued...

From floorstanders to standmounters to all-in-one active monitors

BUDGET Up to £500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Standmounts	Floorstanders	Sensitivity (db/w/m)	Impedance (ohm)	Max power handling (w)	Biwirable	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Finishes
Focal-JMlab Chorus 714s	479	07.04/GT	★★★★★	Deeply impressive on every level. The 714s are clear winners in their class.		●	91	8	90		90x20x27	3
Gale Gold Monitor	90	02.02/GT	★★★★☆	Decent buy if you're on a budget - match them with smooth-sounding kit.	●		88	6	90	●	27x18x18	2
Gale Silver Monitor	80	07.01/GT	★★★☆☆	Good and are at their best with rock, but watch out for peaky treble.	●		88	6	90	●	27x18x17	2
Heybrook HB1 2000	180	09.02/ST	★★★★☆	Classy and can be sublime with classical music. Not for Rock and Dance fans.	●		90	6	75	●	38x21x24	2
Heybrook HB2	230	11.00/FT	★★★★☆	Fine dynamics and scale, but not quite as balanced as the competition.	●		90	6	100	●	43x24x29	2
Heybrook HB3	350	05.02/ST	★★★★☆	Will appeal to those who place refinement and definition above all.		●	90	6	100	●	90x24x29	2
Heybrook HB4	500	03.01/ST	★★★★☆	Capable speakers that excel with voices but are too polite, so lack sparkle.		●	90	6	150	●	100x24x29	2
Heybrook Point Five	130	01.01/ST	★★★★★	Superb value for money, they are a genuinely musical pair of speakers.	●		89	6	70	●	30x17x20	2
Jamo E805	179	09.03/ST	★★★☆☆	Small in stature and sound, but the price tag is comparatively large.	●		90	8	100	●	31x19x24	3
JPW 201	119	02.02/GT	★★★★☆	Fine-looking tiny speakers with a more than acceptable sound at the price.	●		90	6	60		26x15x24	2
JPW 202	159	03.02/ST	★★★★☆	Solid performers but don't have the talent to worry the class leaders.	●		91	6	80	●	38x21x30	2
JPW Millennium ML 510i	150	06.00/ST	★★★★☆	Pleasant, listenable speakers with fine rhythmic ability, but they lack detail.	●		89	6	70	●	33x22x20	2
KEF Cresta 10	130	09.03/ST	★★★☆☆	They're cheap, but KEF can do much better than these disappointments.	●		90	8	100	●	31x19x24	3
KEF Cresta 30	200	12.03/FT	★★★☆☆	A better bet than the Cresta 10s, but the series is a disappointment.		●	90	8	100	●	83x19x24	3
Klegg KG-103	299	05.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Attractive to look at but the sound quality is unimpressive at this price level.	●		87	8	60		30x19x25	4
Linn Classik Unik	250	01.03/GT	★★★★★	With the Classik Music System they're easy to listen to and have fine insight.	●		88	8	n/a		36x32x34	2
Magnat Vector Needle 11	149	01.01/ST	★★★☆☆	Well-built, cute and certainly have sonic merits, but there's better out there.	●		89	6	50		22x13x15	3
Magnat Vintage 120	349	12.01/ST	★★☆☆☆	Look brilliant, but disappoint with a ham-fisted sonic performance.		●	91	4	150	●	97x20x32	2
Magnat Vintage 420	499	05.02/ST	★★☆☆☆	Well built but poorly balanced speakers - there are more attractive options.		●	92	4	280	●	100x25x31	4
Mission 780SE	350	07.03/GT	★★★★☆	Victims of rapidly improving competition - still good, no longer outstanding.	●		87	8	150	●	28x17x27	Ald
Mission m31i	140	12.04/GT	★★★★★	We fully endorse the 'i' for 'improved', these are great little speakers.	●		88	8	75	●	26x17x28	3
Mission m32	170	12.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Capable speaker, but in the face of classy competition it comes up short.	●		90	8	100	●	32x20x33	3
Mission M33i	230	07.05/FT	★★★★★	If you want floorstanders we would happily recommend these mighty Missions.		●	90	8	100	●	85x20x33	3
Mission m34i	330	02.05/ST	★★★★☆	Grand, imposing sound - if you must have a floorstander listen to these.		●	93	8	150	●	25x20x33	3
Mission v60	250	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	We like these a lot, but some of the magic of older designs isn't there.	●		86	8	100	●	30x18x24	3
Mission v62	500	08.03/FT	★★★★☆	Promising start for Mission's Volare range - good value and do little wrong.		●	88	8	100	●	89x21x33	3
Monitor Audio Bronze B2	200	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Well built, refined, sweet and very musical.	●		90	6	100	●	35x19x25	2
Monitor Audio Bronze B4	350	02.03/GT	★★★★☆	Exciting and muscular listen, but not the most faithful reproduction on offer.		●	91	6	150	●	85x19x26	2
Monitor Audio Silver S5	450	05.04/ST	★★★★☆	Fine speakers, but don't do enough to challenge for class honours.		●	90	6	100	●	80x18x20	4
Mordaunt-Short Avant 902	150	12.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Authority and scale in abundance, but they're decidedly average in other ways.	●		89	8	100	●	29x17x27	2
Mordaunt-Short Avant 906	350	05.04/ST	★★★★☆	Thrive in large open spaces but not the last word in sonic excellence.		●	90	6	150	●	85x17x30	2
Mordaunt-Short MS912	200	09.02	★★★☆☆	Disappointing design which is average with h-fi but better with movies.	●		89	6	150	●	36x21x30	2
Mordaunt-Short MS914	250	07.04/GT	★★★★★	Cracking value for money - refreshingly uncomplicated, full of enthusiasm.		●	89	6	150	●	90x21x27	2
NHT SB2	300	02.05/ST	★★★★☆	Among the most enthusiastic speakers around, only drawback is the treble.	●		92	8	150	●	30x19x22	Bk
Opera Mini	495	08.04/GT	★★★★☆	Italian and beautiful - deliver a lively and entertaining sound.	●		86	8	50		28.16.21	2
Quad 11L	379	05.04/ST	★★★★★	Best stereo speakers £250-£500 in Awards 2004. Sky-high standard.	●		86	6	100	●	33x19x24	4
Quad 12L	500	07.05/GT	★★★★☆	Talented standmount speakers with superlative standard of finish.	●		88	6	125	●	36x21x25	4
Revolver R33	499	04.03/ST	★★★★☆	Highly competent standmounters, not ideal if you value excitement above all.	●		89	8	100	●	39x21x28	Mp
Revolver RW16	399	05.04/ST	★★★★☆	Immensely likeable - take a longer listen than normal to get hooked.	●		90	6	100	●	34x18x23	2
Ruark Acoustics Epilogue II	345	08.02	★★★★☆	Mightily appealing with classy build and fine midrange - warrant an audition.	●		87	8	100	●	27x19x23	Va
Tannoy Fusion 1	100	08.04/FT	★★★★☆	Classy and largely capable - if cash is tight then these are a solid buy.	●		87	8	70		30x17x22	2
Tannoy Sensys DC1	449	07.03/FT	★★★★☆	Highly competent speakers, but would benefit from a more passion.	●		88	8	110	●	41x21x29	3
Triangle Comete Es	495	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	Exciting and involving but not what you'd call a relaxing listen.	●		91	8	80	●	17x14x13	3
Triangle Titus Es	370	09.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Capable speakers but in the face of stiff competition they fail to inspire.	●		90	8	60	●	37x30x18	3
Wharfedale Diamond 8.1	120	09.03/ST	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Neat solution for small listening rooms.	●		86	6	100	●	30x20x18	2
Wharfedale Diamond 8.2	150	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	Impressive but they are no longer a match in this highly competitive field.	●		86	6	100	●	36x21x26	2
Wharfedale Diamond 8.3	200	12.01	★★★★★	Terrific performers for the money. Few can match their all-round abilities.		●	86	6	100	●	80x21x26	2
Wharfedale Diamond 9.1	180	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Stereo speakers Product of the Year in Awards 2004.	●		86	6	100	●	30x19x28	4

Wharfedale Diamond 9.1

Twenty quid change from £200 and you're blessed with a fantastic pair of stereo speakers. You might say these have been 20 years in the making because that's how long Wharfedale has been updating and tweaking its Diamonds – and rough they are not! Tight bass, clear midband, and sparkling treble for not a lot of cash.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
STEREO SPEAKERS
WHARFEDALE DIAMOND 9.1

Wharfedale Diamond 9.4	300	02.05/ST	★★★☆☆	Can't hold a candle to their little brother - they're a plodding, unexciting listen.		●	86	6	120	●	85x22x30	2
Wharfedale Pacific Evo 10	320	07.03/FT	★★★★☆	Loads of bass for the money but they lack the sparkle of the best at this price.	●		87	6	150	●	38x23x34	3
Wharfedale Pacific Evo 20	450	06.03/FT	★★★★☆	With more control and detail they'd win full marks. Position away from walls.		●	87	6	150	●	85x23x34	3

BUDGET £501 to £1500

Acoustic Energy Aelite Three	750	09.04/FT	★★★★★	Big, bold and balanced speakers for sensible money.		●	89	8	175	●	92x23x30	3
Arcaydis AK3	599	07.03/FT	★★★★★	Highly enjoyable; look plain and boxy but sound sweet and full-bodied.		●	89	8	100	●	79x20x24	Va
Arcaydis AK3.2	950	06.04/FT	★★★★☆	Spritely pair of floorstanders that should certainly be worth an audition.		●	89	8	100	●	90x20x24	3
ART Skibo	800	08.03/FT	★★★★☆	Fast and fun enough to make these speakers worth a serious listen.	●		90	8	n/a		44x19x25	2
ATC SCM12	1000	12.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in Awards 2003. Extremely honest, work best with muscular amps.	●		84	8	300	●	39.22.26	Ch
Audio Note AZ-Three	799	10.01	★★★★☆	Stunning when fed the right kind of music. Rockers may find they lack punch.		●	94	6	100	●	100x28x32	Va
Audiovector Mi1 Signature	1320	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	Sufficient talent to tangle with the class-leaders, but a bit pricey.	●		88	8	160	●	35x20x28	5

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

GLOSSARY
page 186

Speakers continued...

From floorstanders to standmounters to all-in-one active monitors

BUDGET £501 to £1500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Standmounts	Floorstanders	Sensitivity (db/w/m)	Impedance (ohm)	Max power handling (w)	Biwirable	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Finishes
AVI Pro-Nine-Plus	800	06.05/ST	★★★★☆	Offer thrilling dynamics and speed – give them a long listen.	●		90	8	250		34x23x24	2
B&W 704	1400	03.04/GT	★★★★★	Offers detail and clarity that is unrivalled at this price, but could time better.		●	90	8	150		96x22x32	5
B&W 705	900	12.03/GT	★★★★☆	Low end is a little short of authority but otherwise they're stunners.	●		89	8	120	●	42.22.32	5
B&W DM603 S3	600	08.02/FT	★★★★☆	Highly listenable - big bass makes them ideal as home cinema fronts.		●	90	8	150	●	91.20.29	3
Castle Conway 3	950	10.02/ST	★★★☆☆	Promise much, don't have the sonic ability to challenge the best at this price.		●	88	8	175	●	91x22x27	9
Castle Howard S3	1450	08.01/FT	★★★★☆	Excellent craftsmanship and solid performance. Well worth an audition.		●	88	8	175	●	99x21x32	9
Castle Pembroke	550	08.00/FT	★★★★☆	Fine-looking and well-built, but they lack that last ounce of sparkle.		●	88	8	75	●	73x19x21	9
DALI Ikon 6	899	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Generous and full-bodied sound that works well with all types of music.		●	91.5	6		●	100x19x33	2
DALI Royal Menuet II	575	10.00	★★★★☆	Refined and musical performers that work best in smaller rooms. Superb.	●		86	4	100	●	26x16x19	4
Diapason Emera	875	08.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Capable of impressive performance, but they lack dynamics and drive.	●		89	8	130		37x20x29	3
Dynaudio Audience 52	650	11.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Classy and will grace any mid-price set up.	●		86	4	150		33.20.26	4
Dynaudio Audience 52SE	950	06.05/ST	★★★★☆	Excellent speakers that really do sound like a special edition upgrade.	●		86	4	150		35x20x26	4
Elac FS207.2	1000	09.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Decent performers for the money, but not the greatest.		●	89	4	250	●	94x17x27	2
Energy Connoisseur C-7	800	04.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Do the job, but for this kind of money you can buy some amazing speakers.		●	93	8	200		97x17x39	2
Epos M15.2	699	05.04/FT	★★★★☆	Accomplished all-rounders, offering solid performance at a reasonable price.		●	88	8	120	●	87x20x25	3
Epos M22	949	06.05/ST	★★★★★	Best floorstanders in this supertest - they'll give you a rousing sonic ride.		●	87	6	200	●	88x20x25	3
Everything But The Box Terra II	999	10.04/FT	★★★★☆	Unique styling which won't suit everyone, but they are extremely capable.	●		86	8	100		38x18x28	14
Jamo D430	629	10.03/FT	★★☆☆☆	Poor performers - just not up to the high standards of the competition.	●		88	4	140		34x21x31	3
JBL Ti2K	1400	03.00/FT	★★★★★	Terrific design that looks great - astonishing sound for under £2000.	●		88	8	200	●	42x28x42	2
KEF XQ Five	1500	05.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Aren't the sonic stars we expected - the Reference range does better.		●	90	8	150	●	101x23x30	5
KEF XQ One	750	06.03/ST	★★★★☆	Not the best, but if their style appeals we'd urge you to take a listen.	●		89	8	120	●	42x23x31	5
Linn Katan	650	09.01	★★★★☆	Involving and entertaining performers - work well with a wide range of music.	●		85	8	n/a	●	34x17x23	4
Linn Ninka	1100	10.01	★★★☆☆	Unusual shape and beautiful finish, but their performance is only average.		●	90	4	n/a	●	98x25x28	3
Mission 782SE	900	06.03/ST	★★★★★	'Special edition' - possibly the most talented a grand or so will buy.		●	89	8	200	●	80x17x30	Ald
Monitor Audio Gold Ref. 10	800	08.01/FT	★★★★★	Few speakers 36cm tall are capable of a sound with so much conviction.	●		88	8	100	●	36x20x27	4
Monitor Audio Gold Ref. 20	1499	03.01/FT	★★★★★	Immensely accomplished - fast and dynamic sound with bags of resolution.		●	89	6	150	●	93x20x30	4
Monitor Audio Silver RS6	600	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Looks dressed to kill, delivers plenty of detail and punches like a heavyweight.		●	91	6	120	●	85x19x25	5
Monitor Audio Silver S6	600	11.03/GT	★★★★☆	Impressive with good timing and attack, but the bass can be heavy-handed.		●	91	6	120	●	85x19x25	4
Monitor Audio Silver S8	800	03.03/FT	★★★★☆	Smart, well built speaker that offers a wide dynamic range..		●	91	6	175	●	90x19x27	4
PMC GB1	995	06.05/ST	★★★★☆	Clever design creates a big sound that is good fun to listen to.		●	87	8	150	●	87x16x23	3
ProAc Tablette Reference 8	699	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Great speakers that can entertain like few others at this price.	●		86	8	100	●	27x15x23	4
Quad 22L	895	06.05/ST	★★★★☆	Very capable speakers – their big, bold sound suits larger rooms.		●	89	6	200	●	87x21x28	4
Revolver R45	899	06.05/ST	★★★★☆	Big, smooth, relaxing sound but don't use them in small rooms.		●	90	8	200	●	93x25x32	3
Ruark Acoustics Etude	650	04.03/ST	★★★★☆	Much to like - good timing, refined midrange and an exciting listen.	●		87	8	120	●	34x21x27	4
Ruark Acoustics Prelude II	900	10.02/ST	★★★★☆	Tempting propositions, the performance promises years of enjoyment.		●	88	8	120	●	88x21x22	Va
Ruark Acoustics Sabre III	899	06.05/ST	★★★★★	Thrilling delivery really makes you want to listen to music.	●		86	8	120		34x20x27	2
Spendor S3/5se	850	12.03/GT	★★★★☆	Wonderfully natural-sounding, expecially useful for smaller rooms.	●		84	8	125	●	30x17x19	2
Spendor S3e	795	06.05/ST	★★★★★	Superb performers that put more expensive, less talented rivals to shame.	●		86	8	125	●	34x17x26	4
Spendor S5e	1095	07.04/FT	★★★★★	Best stereo speakers £1000-£2000 in Awards 2004.		●	87	8	200	●	79x17x26	4
Spendor S6e	1495	11.04/FT	★★★★☆	Thoroughly enjoyable, great choice for long listening sessions.		●	88	8	250	●	88x19x30	4
Spendor SR5 (wallmount)	1000	06.03/FT	★★★★★	Wallmounts - sacrifice nothing in sonic performance to traditional speakers.	●		88	8	125	●	31x31x18	4
Tannoy Eyris 1	600	04.03/ST	★★★☆☆	Eye-catching design, but their cold character will leave you unmoved.	●		88	8	75	●	36x17x26	2
Tannoy Eyris 2	1000	02.02/FT	★★★★☆	Fine buy, combining refined sound, solid build and excellent finish.		●	89	8	125	●	91x17x26	2
Tannoy Sensys DC2	649	11.03/GT	★★★★☆	Serious floorstander option - take care with aggressive or bright-sounding kit.		●	89	8	175	●	97x21x29	3

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RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

GLOSSARY
page 186

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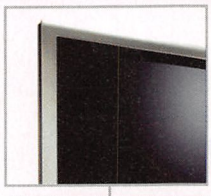
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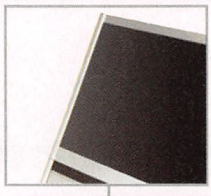
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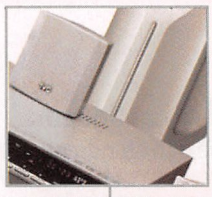
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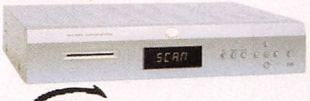

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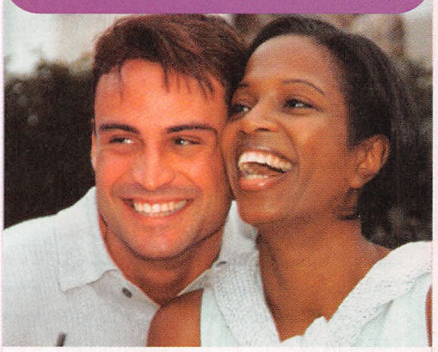

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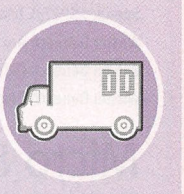

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Speakers continued...

From floorstanders to standmounters to all-in-one active monitors

BUDGET £501 to £1500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Standmounts	Floorstanders	Sensitivity (db/w/m)	Impedance (ohm)	Max power handling (w)	Biwirable	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Finishes
Tannoy ST50 (SuperTweeter)	600	12.02/FT	★★★★★	Super-high-frequency speakers, designed to sit on your existing pair.			93	8	200		15x10	Bk
Vienna Acoustics Haydn	650	09.01	★★★☆☆	Belting build and great with classical but they lack the boogie factor.	●		89	6	180		34x17x25	6
Vienna Acoustics Schönberg	1500	03.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Good looking, but sonically more suited to home cinema than hi-fi.		●	91	4	200		105x27x9	Al
Wharfedale Pacific Evo 30	650	11.03/GT	★★★★★	Fantastic value - space-hungry but you'll be stunned by the dynamics.		●	89	6	200	●	88x23x40	3

BUDGET £1501 and over

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Standmounts	Floorstanders	Sensitivity (db/w/m)	Impedance (ohm)	Max power handling (w)	Biwirable	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Finishes
Acoustic Energy AE1 MkIII	1990	07.04/FT	★★★★★	Best stereo speakers over £2000 in Awards 2004. Incredible performance.	●		87	8	200		31x19x25	3
ART Expression (+ stands)	4000	10.02/FT	★★★★☆	Terrific speakers that can unravel a recording with ease. Deserve shortlisting.	●		88	8	100		42x20x30	Va
ART Skibo/Skibo bass module	1600	08.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Transforms the Skibo into a floorstander, but it's not worth the extra £800.		●	90	8	n/a	●	108x22x28	2
ATC Active 20	3251	11.03/FT	★★★★★	Top class active speakers - a stunning blend of insight, dynamics and timing.	●		84	8	300	●	30.16.21	Ch
ATC SCM150ASL	11858	06.05/FT	★★★★★	If you judge on how they sound these are up there with the all-time greats.	●		-	-	A350		34.8x19.6x25.5	6
ATC SCM35	1999	03.04/GT	★★★★★	Scintillating - following a design blip the SCM35s are back with a vengeance.		●	85	8	300	●	88x23x30	2
B&O Beolab 8000	2298	01.03/GT	★★★★☆	Tall, slender and organ-piped shaped - fine with BeoSound 9000 system.		●		-	A80		132x15x15	Al
B&O BeoLab3	1800	09.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Impressive visually and some excellent qualities, but they cost far too much.	●		-	-	A125/125		43x25x38	Bk
B&O BeoLab5	10000	05.04/FT	★★★★☆	Work equally well as sculpture as they do speakers - gratify on every level.		●	-	-	A2500		97x49dia	Bk
B&W 703	2000	10.04/FT	★★★★☆	There's a great deal to admire about these speakers. Need plenty of power.		●	90	8	200	●	101x23x36	5
B&W 805S	1600	07.05/FT	★★★★★	Quite probably the best speaker under £2000.	●		88	8	120	●	42x24x35	3
DALI Helicon 300	1835	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	If you listen to acoustic, classical or vocal-based music you'll love these Dalis.	●		86	4	200	●	44x21x36	2
Dynaudio Audience 72SE	1750	01.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Quality speakers, but they lack the of refinement of others in this price range.		●	86	4	230		96x20x26	4
Dynaudio Audience 82	1700	03.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Will please the bass-heads, but for pure hi-fi perfomance look elsewhere.		●	86	4	300		106x22x36	4
Eclipse TD 512	1750	05.02/FT	★★★★★	Partnered with the A502 amp they make a great package.	●		81	6	30		29x37x36	Bk
Eclipse TD 712z	4000	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	Remarkable, will bring uncompromised musicality into your living room.	●		83.5	6	70		98x35x38	Sl
Energy Veritas 2.3i	2400	02.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Solid build, but they aren't as dynamic as the class leaders at this price.		●	90	8	200		103x22x36	2
Ferguson Hill FH 001	9950	07.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Stunning looking acrylic horn speakers - shame about the performance.		●	100	8	30		165x92x75	Ac
Focal-JMlab Micro Utopia Beryl.	3799	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Stunning - challenging hard for the 'World's Best' standmount title.	●		89	8	100		43x25x38	3
Harbeth Super HL5	2079	05.03/FT	★★★★★	Lookers they're not - but when they sing, few rivals can match them.	●		85	8	150	●	64x32x30	2
JBL Ti6K	2600	09.02/FT	★★★★☆	Stylish speakers with some strong qualities but they lack cohesion.	●		90	6	300	●	110x38x53	2
KEF Reference Model 203	3000	09.02/FT	★★★★★	Excellent - superb all-round sonic performance and fine build and finish.		●	89	8	200	●	107x25x41	3
Meridian DSP33	2595	10.00/FT	★★★★☆	Actives with D/A conversion: terrific concept that works extremely well.	●		n/a	n/a	A50/85		40x15x23	Bk
Meridian DSP5200	6150	04.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Stunning DSP speakers in some ways, but we expected more.		●	-	-	A75x3		90x30x36	6
Mordaunt-Short Performance 6	3500	05.05/FT	★★★★★	Sensational flagship floorstanders that sound scarily realistic and look lavish.		●	89	6	150	●	121x24x37	2
NHT Evolution T5	2820	05.05/FT	★★★★★	Unusual approach - a great alternative to traditional stereo designs.		●	-	-	A4x250		108x19x44	Bk
PMC FB1+	1625	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Fun-loving, expressive delivery with exceptional feeling of power and weight.		●	90	8	150	●	100x20x30	3
PMC IB1	4815	04.01	★★★★★	Revealing and enjoyable in equal doses and will please the bass fiends.	●		89	4	500	●	74x33x47	Va
PMC OB1	2450	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in Awards 2003. Spectacular, controlled and highly musical.		●	87	6	300	●	103x20x33	3
ProAc Response D15	1790	11.02/FT	★★★★★	Musically involving presentation and superlative build - take a long listen.		●	88	8	180	●	98x19x25	6
Quad ESL-988	3500	12.00/FT	★★★★★	World class - the single driver presents a fabulously together sound.			86	8	n/a		94x67x32	3
Revel M22	1700	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Well-made, dynamic and enthusiastic – inject drive into your music.	●		85	6.4	n/a	●	37x22x30	3
Sonus Faber Cremona Auditor	2149	02.04/FT	★★★★★	Delightful, with a graceful sound that'll pamper your ears hour after hour.	●		88	4	250		35x19x32	2
Spendor S8e	1895	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Hugely enjoyable listening experience, but lower frequencies fail to convince.		●	89	8	300	●	92x23x32	4
Spendor SP2/3E (classic)	1750	07.00	★★★★★	Will delight with their combination of naturalness, insight and scale.	●		88	8	80	●	54x27x32	2
Wilson Benesch Arc	2500	02.02/FT	★★★★★	The very best of Wilson Benesch speaker magic in a pint-pot design.	●		88	6	200	●	31x23x37	10
Wilson Benesch Curve	5000	02.05/FT	★★★★★	Impressive - closer than any rival we've heard to being all things to all people.		●	88	6	200	●	91x23x37	8
Wilson Benesch Discovery	5700	04.01	★★★★★	Innovative design for the music lover - appeal to the ears and eyes.		●	87	6	200	●	108x23x27	Gr

Micro & style systems

Music in the kitchen and bedroom can sound good and look good, too

BUDGET Up to £500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	SOURCE: CD	MP3	DAB	FM	MW	LW	SW	RDS	RECORDS: MiniDisc	CD-R/-RW	MP3	Hard disk	Inputs	Speakers
Bush CDP2025/AMP2025	180	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Separate CD player and amp - good value and it sounds great for the cash.	●												4	
Creative SoundWorks CD740	200	03.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Clock radio with speakers and CD player - tested at £300 now better value.	●	●		●	●								2	●
Denon D-F101	450	02.03/FT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Blurs the distinction between micro and hi-fi.	●			●				●					5	●
Denon D-M33	300	09.05/FT	★★★★☆	This successor to the D-M31 is great but it is not exceptional. Try different speakers.	●			●	●			●					2	●
Denon D-M35DAB	380	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Another cracking micro from Denon – this one adds DAB. But skip the speakers.	●		●	●	●			●					2	●
Genus PR1i (portable)	135	06.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Comes with DAB, FM and CD playback, put poor sound means it's not a contender.	●		●	●									-	●
Goodmans 1104DAB	89	04.05/GT	★★★★★	Best hi-fi micro system under £150 in Awards 2004 - ideal for bedroom/kitchen.	●		●										0	●
Goodmans GPS285DAB (port)	79	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	Striking looks and jam-packed with features, but the sound quality lets it down.	●		●	●	●	●								●
Hitachi AX-M68D	200	12.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	A case of style over substance - the sound just doesn't match the looks.	●		●	●				●					2	●
Ministry of Sound MOSMC018	180	05.04/FT	★★★★☆	Well equipped and stylish white cube system. It even includes a DAB tuner.	●		●	●	●								1	●
Ministry of Sound MOSRC 023	100	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Stand-out boombox - we love the alternative design and the bass power.	●	●	●	●	●								1	●
Morphy Richards 29100	100	04.05/GT	★★★★☆	Proves as good as it looks and unusually employs NXT flat-panel speakers.	●			●										●
Onkyo CD505DAB	220	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Diverting and affordable but don't dally with the matching speakers.	●	●	●	●	●			●					3	
Panasonic SCEN9	180	12.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Impressively compact, but sadly the sound is equally as thin and lightweight.	●		●	●	●									●
Pure Digital Legato	300	11.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Does a lot of things well, but in sonic terms it can't compete with the leaders.	●	●	●	●				●					1	●
Russ Andrews RAVE (amp/spkrs)	300	09.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Mini sound system - nice idea, but you can get better performance at this price.													4	●

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

GLOSSARY
page 186

Micro & style systems continued...

Music in the kitchen and bedroom can sound good and look good, too

BUDGET Up to £500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	SOURCE: CD	MP3	DAB	FM	MW	LW	SW	RDS	RECORDS: MiniDisc	CD-R/-RW	MP3	Hard disk	Inputs	Speakers
Sanyo MCD-ZX500F (portable)	45	07.04/FT	★★★½☆	Competitively priced, but low on features and sonically a little limited.	●			●	●								0	●
Sanyo MCD-ZX710F (portable)	65	07.04/FT	★★★½☆	Jack of all trades, but master of none - decent but unremarkable portable.	●			●									0	●
Sony CMT-SE1	280	03.04/GT	★★★★½	Looks great and sounds good. If you're a fan of Sony style, give it a try.	●			●	●			●						●
TEAC MCDX10	180	Awd.04	★★★½☆	Fantastically svelte looks with lashings of style - the sound is less exciting.	●			●	●								1	●
TEAC Reference 250 DAB	300	10.04/FT	★★★★½	Great-value option for DAB radio fans. Bigger speakers mean bigger bass.	●		●	●	●			●					3	●

BUDGET £501 and over

Arcam Solo	1000	03.05/FT	★★★★★	Excellent all-round sound combined with the convenience of a one-box product.	●	●	●	●	●			●					5	

Arcam Solo

We're always sceptical when we hear a company talk about a "high-end all-in-one system". that's because we associate high-end hi-fi separates, not with single-box products. However, Arcam's Solo – CD/amp/tuner combo – bridges the gap superbly. It's the ultimate convenience item, and it sounds special, too.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION BEST IN CLASS

B&O Beosound 3000/Blab 4000	2525	09.00/FT	★★★★½	Looks guaranteed to turn heads and a performance that's pretty impressive.	●			●	●	●		●					2	●
B&O Beosound 3200	1725	07.03/FT	★★★½☆	Style, quality engineering and a 40GB CD memory, but it is not great hi-fi.	●			●	●			●				●	1	
B&O Beosound 9000	2550	01.03/GT	★★★★½	Guaranteed to turn heads and a performance that is impressive to boot.	●			●	●			●					1	
Denon 201SA	800	08.02/FT	★★★★★	Stylish, listenable mini system that sounds almost as good as it looks.	●			●	●			●					7	●
Linn Classik Music	995	04.01/ST	★★★★★	With Classik Unik speakers, a flexible system with true separates performance.	●			●	●								3	
Red Rose Spirit IA1 LS1	1999	12.02/FT	★★★★½	Minimalist amp and small speakers - good sound for the house-proud muso.													4	●
Sugden Master System	2647	05.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. It has it all: looks, build and sonic talent.	●												2	
T+A K1	1700	01.03/GT	★★½☆☆	Eye-catching, but fails to deliver the sort of sound we'd expect for this price.	●			●				●					2	

Speaker cables

One of the most cost-effective system upgrades – ever

BUDGET Up to £7/m

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Multistrand	Solid core	Flat	Diameter (mm)	CONDUCTOR: Copper	Silver	Carbon	Other	Termination	Directional	Biwire
Atlas 2+1.1	5.50	11.03/GT	★★★★½	Not the most exciting-sounding cable, but it is sensible value for money.	●			8.5	●				40	●	
Atlas Basic Biwire	3.75	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Cracking entry-level cable that offers a neutral balance.	●			2x7	●						●
Audioquest Type 4	6.00	10.01/GT	★★★★½	Smooth and refined presentation - ideal to help soften aggressive systems.	●			8.0	●					●	
Black Rhodium T200	5.25	09.02/GT	★★★½☆	Eminently suitable for rear speakers but don't use in a stereo system.	●		●	6.0	●						
Black Rhodium T90	5.00	10.03/GT	★★★½☆	Thin spaghetti-like cable that delivers a fast, agile and cohesive sound.		●		2.8	●	●					
Chord Co Carnival Silver Plus	5.50	09.04/FT	★★★★★	Cable Product of the Year - Chord Carnival Silver - in Awards 2004.	●			12x6	●	●			40	●	
DNM Reson MkII	6.95	05.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in Awards 2000 - a blend of smoothness, power and excitement.		●	●		●					●	
Ecosse CS-2.2 Plus	2.80	09.02/GT	★★★½☆	Designed as a first-step upgrade, certainly better than the standard stuff.	●			7.4	●				40		
Ecosse Mini Flat 4	3.25	10.03/GT	★★★½☆	Flexible and unobtrusive - but sound is compressed and bass lacks clarity.	●		●	-	●				Unterm		●
Ecosse Ref CS-2.3	3.85	01.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Ensures bass is taut and imaging is top-notch.	●			8.2	●				40		
Ixos XHS-606W	2.50	10.00/GT	★★★★½	Twisted braid construction - performs well, but lacks midrange detail.	●			2x1.7	●						
Ixos XHS-806W	5.00	11.04/GT	★★★½☆	Improvement over freebie cable but others do it better.	●			2x2.6	●						
Merlin C4	2.50	09.04/FT	★★★★½	Fine entry-level cable, most suitable for slightly warm-sounding set-ups.	●		●	11x.9	●				50		
Merlin C6	4.50	11.04/GT	★★★★½	Great-sounding cable but the build and finish is disappointing.	●		●	16	●				50	●	
Nordost Cinemaflex 14/2	5.00	09.02/GT	★★★★½	Try this clear-sounding cable - you can do better in terms of sheer power.	●			6.0	●	●				●	
QED Micro Bi-wire	3.50	Awd.00	★★★★½	Competitively priced, ideal for discreet installations. Delivers fine detail.	●			13.3x2.6	●				68		●
QED Original Mk II Biwire	5.50	10.00/GT	★★★★★	Truly excellent levels of detail and spaciousness make this cable a winner.	●			17.0x3.6	●				68	●	●
QED Silver Micro	3.50	06.05/FT	★★★★½	Decent performer and an attractive option for those on a tight budget.	●			5.0x2.5	●				inc		

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★★★★½ Very good
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08456 777813

GLOSSARY
page 186

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Hitachi	42PD5300
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Panasonic	TH37PW7B
Panasonic	TH42PE30B
Panasonic	TH42PW7B
Panasonic	TH50PV30B
Philips	37PF9946
Philips	42PF9966
Philips	42PF9986
Pioneer	PDP435XDE
Pioneer	PDP435FDE-TE
Pioneer	PDP505XDE
Pioneer	PDP503MXEV
Samsung	PS42V4SX
Samsung	PS50P3HXX
Sharp	LC37GD1E
Sony	KDEP42M1SI
Sony	KEP37M1S
Sony	KDEP37XS1
Sony	KDEP42SX1
Sony	KDEP42MRX1
Vision	PM4230
Toshiba	42WP46B

LCD TELEVISIONS

MAKE	MODEL
DMTech	DML4117WD
DMTech	DML4120SD
Hitachi	17LD4220
Hitachi	28LD5200
JVC	LT17C50
JVC	LT17D50
JVC	LT23C50
JVC	LT26D50S
JVC	LT32D50S
LG	RZ15LA70
LG	RZ20LA70
LG	RZ17LZ40
LG	RZ26LZ50
Loewe	MIMO15C
Panasonic	TX20LA2
Panasonic	TX22LX2
Panasonic	TX26LXD1
Panasonic	TX32LXD1
Philips	15PF8946
Philips	17PF9946
Philips	23PF8946
Philips	23PF9946
Philips	30PF9946
Philips	32PF9976
Philips	23HM8821
Philips	32PF9986
Philips	37PF9986
Philips	42PF9986C
Samsung	LE15E31SX
Samsung	LW20M11CX
Samsung	LW17N23NX
Sanyo	27LC3
Sanyo	30LD3
Sharp	LC15SH1E
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Sharp	LC20SH1E
Sharp	LC32GD1E
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Sony	KLVL23M1B
Sony	KLV21SG2
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A/V SYSTEMS

MAKE	MODEL
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Denon	DHT550SD
JVC	THS3
JVC	THS5
JVC	THSW8
JVC	THA75R
JVC	QP112AL
JVC	QPF30AL
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Pioneer	DCS323
Pioneer	DCS222MR
Pioneer	HC51S
Pioneer	DCS424
Pioneer	NSDV1000
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Sony	DAVSB200
Sony	HTDDW860
Sony	DAVSB300
Sony	DAVSR1
Sony	DAVSB500W
Sony	DAVSR3
Sony	DAVSR2
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Sony	DAVSR4W
Sony	DAVLF1
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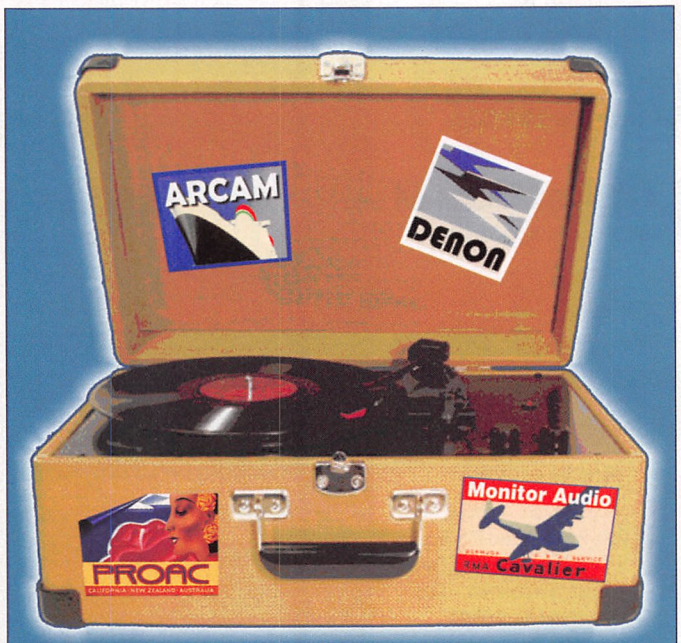

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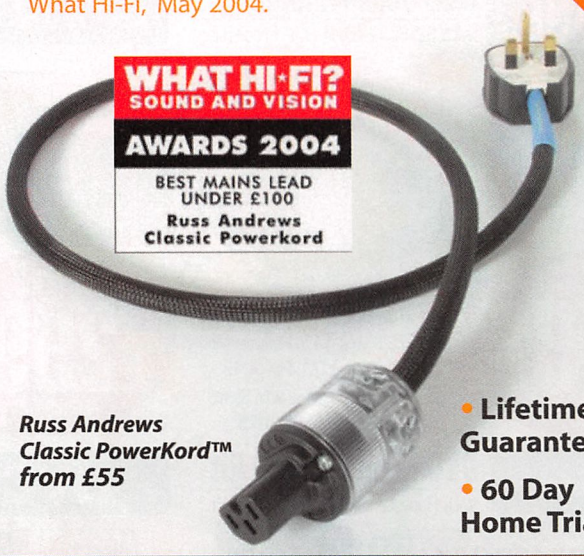

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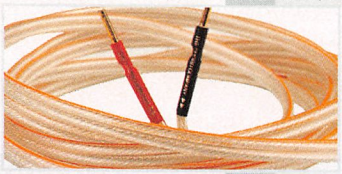
BUDGET Up to £7/m															
Supra Classic 4.0T	4	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	Solid performer at a sensible price. Detail is good rather than great.	●			4.0	●			●		●	
Supra Rondo 4x2.5	5	09.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Excellent design for biwiring applications.	●			4x2.5	●			●		●	●
True Col Ind Sidewinder Biwire	6	04.03/GT	★★★★☆	Conspicuous and colourful biwire cable. Avoid if you have aggressive kit.	●		●	2x2.5	●				5.99	●	●
BUDGET £8/m and over															
Atlas Apex	25	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Ideal for those who don't want to further aggravate an aggressive set-up.	●			7.5	●				40		
Atlas Ascent	25	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Highly tuneful and refined, every last musical note being uncovered.	●			8.0	●				40		
Atlas Hyper 3.0	20	06.05/FT	★★★★★	Multi-talented cable that's certain to keep you coming back for more.	●			8.0	●				58		
Audio Note AN-Ba (stereo m)	33	10.01/GT	★★★☆☆	Smooth presentation with plenty of weight and scale but you can buy better.	●			8.0	●				33		
Audioquest Slate (3m pair)	250	04.02/GT	★★★★★	Lays bare foibles in characterful components; dazzles top-quality kit.	●			12	●				n/a	●	
Black Rhodium S300x2	40	10.01	★★★☆☆	Neither detail levels or finesse excel - we'd expect more for the money.	●			12	●	●					●
Chord Co Carnival Silver Biwire	9.50	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Cable Product of the Year - Chord Carnival Silver - in Awards 2004.	●			25x6	●	●			50		●
Chord Co Odyssey 2	17.95	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	For a vibrant and entertaining sound this is a good place for your money.	●			8.0	●	●			40	●	
Chord Co Rumour 4 Biwire	21.95	07.01/GT	★★★★★	Not only does it look good, but it's an impressively dynamic performer, too.	●			9.0	●	●			50	●	
Chord Co Signature	115	11.04/GT	★★★★★	One of the most effective upgrades you will ever hear if you own expensive kit.	●			25	●				inc		
Cyrus Speaker Cable	25	03.04/GT	★★★★★	Capable of performing extremely well in more than just Cyrus systems.		●	●	flat	●				inc	●	●
Ecosse CS4.4 Biwire	9	11.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Reasonable, but a long way from being outstanding value for money.	●			10	●				60		●
Ecosse CS4.45	9.75	06.05/FT	★★★★★	Hugely capable cable that allows for an enjoyable listening experience.	●			2.2x1.1	●				60	●	●
Ecosse ES2.3/CS2.15 Biwire	17	07.01/GT	★★★★★	A combination of two different cables that sound stunning in partnership.	●	●			●				60		●
Ecosse Reference ES-2.3	13	10.01/GT	★★★★☆	Dynamics are vivid and help this cable grab the attention like few others.	●			9.5	●				40		
Ecosse Reference ES2.2	8.50	09.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Decent cable but it lacks the polished ability of the best at this price.	●			9.5	●				40		
Kimber 8PR (4.5m terminated)	153	11.03/GT	★★★★★	Slightly oddball 'bundle of wire' looks - sound is direct and impressive.	●			12	●				n/a	●	
Merlin C12	7.50	06.05/GT	★★★★★	Excellent detail and a dynamic ability that's a match for anything at this price.	●		●	10	●				50	●	
Nordost 4 - Flat	12	04.03/GT	★★★★☆	Excellent detail and dynamics - presentation has a pleasing character.		●	●		●					●	●



Chord Company Carnival Silver Biwire

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ES 2.3
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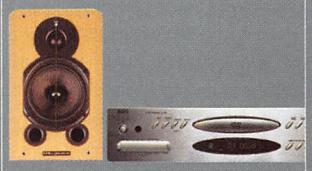

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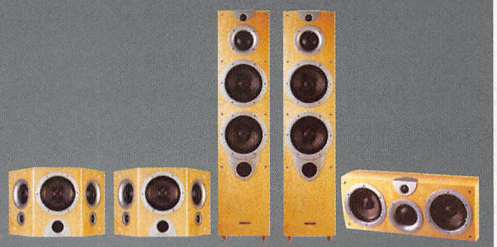

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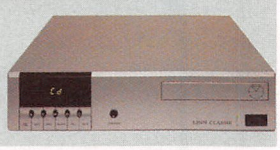

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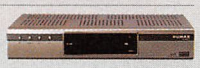

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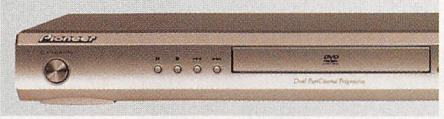

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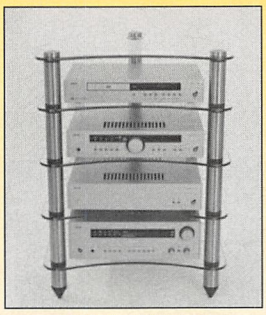
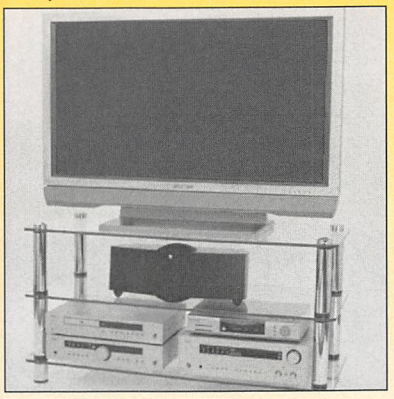


MODEL OPT 660
Optimum's Flagship shown in stainless steel finish



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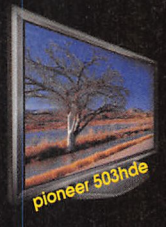

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PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	CONDUCTOR: Multistrand	Solid core	Flat	Diameter (mm)	Copper	Silver	Carbon	Other	Termination	Directional	Biwire
Nordost Cinemaflex 14/4	10	10.01/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Neutral, impeccable precision and dynamics.	●			8	●	●				●	●
Nordost Superflat MkII Biwire	23	07.01/GT	★★★★☆	Fine cable in many ways - perfect for systems with overbearing bass.	●		●	0.6	●					●	●
QED Genesis Sl Spiral Biwire	60	04.02/GT	★★★★☆	Everything simply sounds more real - in the right system it's breathtaking.	●			19.6	●	●			68		●
QED Silver Anniversary Biwire	10	07.01	★★★★★	Delivers open, fast and transparent sound - at the price, it's terrific.	●			17x3.3	●	●			68		●
QED X-Tube XT300	10	09.02/GT	★★★★★	Fast, exciting yet well-balanced cable - makes the most of your system.	●			11.7x5.6	●				45		
QED X-Tube XT350	15	10.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Detail resolution is absolutely terrific.	●			12.1x5.9	●	●			45		
QED X-Tube XT400	20	04.03/GT	★★★★★	Best speaker cable over £10 per metre in Awards 2004.	●			6	●	●			45		
True Colours Ind Anaconda	12	10.03/GT	★★☆☆☆	Cool design but detail and dynamic contrast isn't up to the class leaders.	●		●	2x2.4	●	●			11.99	●	●
True Colours Industries Python	12	10.00/GT	★★★☆☆	Speedy and dynamic, but ultimately disappoints with a muddled bass.	●			9.5	●	●			9.99	●	
van den Hul Goldwater	8.00	09.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Good level of detail but it is not the most neutral cable.	●			17x5	●	●					

Analogue interconnects

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BUDGET Up to £350

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	CONDUCTOR: Multistrand	Solid core	Flat	Length (m)	Diameter (mm)	Copper	Silver	Carbon	Other	Phono term	XLR term	Directional
Abbey Road Monitor Starquad	101	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	Well-made and accomplished interconnect that's worth a listen.	●			0.8m		●				●		
Atlas Equator	40	08.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Fabulous insight whatever music you listen to.	●			1.0	8.5	●				●		
Atlas Explorer	90	07.02/FT	★★★★★	Excellent debut from a new brand - of particular note is the bass performance.	●			1.0	8.5	●				●		
Atlas Questor	60	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Makes your kit sound better - avoids imprinting unwanted character.	●			1.0	8.5	●				●		
Atlas Voyager	110	04.03/GT	★★★★★	Excellent. Detail resolution is great for the money and bass is taut and powerful.	●			1.0	8.5	●				●		
Atlas Voyager All Cu	170	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Excellent - its open nature and rhythmic delivery ensures an enjoyable listen.	●			1.0	8.5	●				●		
Audio Note AN-C	60	08.01/GT	★★★☆☆	Basic presentation is very musical, but tonal flaws mean they aren't up to rivals.	●			1		●				●		
Audioquest Copperhead	72.95	08.02/GT	★★★★☆	Produces a seamless presentation that has plenty of punch and speed.	●			0.75	6	●				●		●
Audioquest Diamondback	95	03.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Beautifully assembled and feels worth the cash but it lacks the dynamics of others.		●		1	8	●				●		●
Black Rhodium Illusion	80	11.03/GT	★★★★★	Intriguing - looks thin and weedy, but sounds rich, powerful and direct.		●		1.0	2.8	●	●			●		
Black Rhodium Melody	35	03.05/GT	★★★★☆	Up against supplied cables this is a very worthwhile leap in sonic quality.	●			1.0	6.3	●				●		
Black Rhodium Opera	297	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Almost justifies its hefty cost, but not quite.		●		1.0	5.6		●			●		
Black Rhodium Polar Melody	95	01.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Solid presentation but bass lacks weight and high frequencies lacks clarity.	●			1.0	6.3	●				●		
Black Rhodium Polar Rhythm	135	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	Likeable but the level of performance on offer doesn't quite match the asking price.	●			1.0	5.5	●	●			●		
Black Rhodium Symphony	95	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	Impressive - tonal balance is neutral and the bass is solid with good detail levels.	●			1.0	8.4				●	●	●	●
Chord Company Calypso	30	10.01/GT	★★★★☆	The fine upper bass punch and fluid midrange make this a solid buy.	●			1.0	0.8	●				●		●
Chord Company Chorus	215	05.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy Awards '01. Terrifically deep bass, taut midrange and spacious top-end.	●			1.0	7.5	●	●			●	●	●
Chord Company Cobra 3	60	03.05/GT	★★★★★	Worthy partner to the Carnival Silver speaker cable - very musical delivery.	●			1.0	6.5	●				●		●
Cyrus Interconnect	90	04.03/GT	★★★★★	Great buy. Crisp dynamics and breathtaking transparency considering the price.		●	●	0.5		●				●		●
DNM Reson Bullet Plug	80	10.02/GT	★★★★★	Product of the Year, Awards 2002. Most open-sounding we've heard under £100.		●	●	1		●				●		
Ecosse Best Boy	26	11.03/GT	★★★★★	No looker, but it's honest and affordable, giving fine performance for the money.	●			1.0		●				●		
Ecosse Conductor CA-1 Original	65	09.00/GT	★★★★★	Product of the Year Winner 2000. Allows all genres of music to sound their best.	●			0.8		●				●		
Ecosse Nu Diva	125	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Not cheap, but they will take your listening experience to a new level.	●			0.8	8.0	●	●			●		
Ecosse The Baton RCA	85	04.03/GT	★★★★☆	Fine punch and authority - this is a good, but not great, interconnect.	●			0.8		●				●		●
Ecosse The Composer	32	08.01/GT	★★★★★	A stellar interconnect - the signal is so well preserved it's hard to believe the price	●			0.8		●				●		
Ecosse The Symphony	229	03.05/GT	★★★★☆	Authoritive and detailed, a real all-rounder, but it is 10 percent too pricey.	●			0.8	11.2	●	●			●	●	●
Insert Audio Image 5.1 (pair)	84.95	03.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Not bad, but there are better stereo interconnects available at this price.	●			1	7	●	●			●	●	●
Ixos XHA306-100	20	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Great for entry-level. Ditch the cable that came with your budget kit and buy these.	●			1.0		●				●		
Ixos XHA406-100	30	08.02/GT	★★★☆☆	Fluid-sounding with a refined delivery. Would be useful in an overly bright system.	●			1		●				●		●
Ixos XHA606-100	60	08.02/GT	★★★☆☆	Designed to reduce interference, but the resulting sound is lazy and undynamic.	●		●	1		●	●			●		●
Ixos XHA806-100	100	10.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Uses impressive gamma-weave noise rejection technology but are disappointing.	●			1		●	●			●		●
Kimber Timbre	83	03.05/GT	★★★★★	Bags of impact and clarity - doesn't work well with bright-sounding kit.	●			1.0	6	●				●	●	●
Kimber Tonik	51	04.03/GT	★★★★☆	Cohesive and informative - will give fine results in most budget systems.	●			1		●				●	●	●
Merlin Bach	50	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Good, fast and capable but rivals offer greater refinement.	●			1.0		●				●		
Merlin Chopin	85	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo interconnect over £50 in Awards 2004. Superb.	●		●	1.0	12	●				●		●
Merlin Verdi	185	03.04/GT	★★★★★	Not cheap. Its performance makes it well worth the money in the right system.	●			1.0	9	●				●		●
Monster I 400 MkII	45	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Slightly ragged treble and cramped soundstage.	●			1.0		●				●		
Nordost Cinemaflex Bassline Sub	303	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	If you have a very good subwoofer in your set-up buy this great sounding cable.	●		●	5	flat	●	●			●	●	●
Profigold PGA-3000	42	04.02/GT	★★★☆☆	Solidly-made cable. Will flatter systems that tend towards thinness or brightness.	●			0.75		●				●		●
QED Qunex 4 Silver	60	09.00/GT	★★★★☆	Classy looking cable that will handle whatever you throw at it with ease.	●			1	8.1	●	●			●		●
QED Qunex Silver Spiral	90	03.05/FT	★★★★☆	Sparkling delivery and presents tunes with good space - lacks the finest dymanics.	●			1.0	8.1	●	●			●		
Roksan HDC-02A	85	09.00/GT	★★★★★	Truly excellent performer, boasting a wide range of sonic talents, at a fair price	●			1		●				●		●
True Colours Industries Cobra	175	11.03/GT	★★★★★	In upmarket set-ups this is an interconnect that will really shine.	●			1.0	6.5	●	●			●	●	●
True Colours Industries Tiger	30	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Looks cheap but, surprisingly, sound quality is polished for the money.	●			1.0	3	●	●			●		
True Colours Industries Viper	70	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	A capable and well-priced interconnect - definitely worth an audition.	●			1.0	6	●				●	●	●
True Colours Ind. ViperSix	180	05.04/FT	★★★★☆	Six channel - insightful but perhaps too restrained for some ears.	●			1.0	21	●				●		●
van den Hul Integration Hybrid	140	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	Beautifully refined sound but doesn't quite justify its pricetag.	●			0.8	7.8				●	●	●	●
van den Hul The Bay C5	50	04.02/GT	★★★★★	A very good all-round performance cable, and excellent value.	●			0.8	5.2	●				●		
van den Hul The First Ultimate	225	09.00/GT	★★★★★	Stunning - if your system's good, these interconnects are highly recommended.	●			1	7.8			●		●		

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
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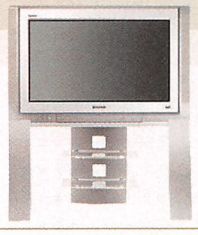

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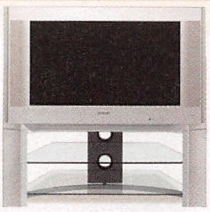

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SCREEN SIZE: 50"
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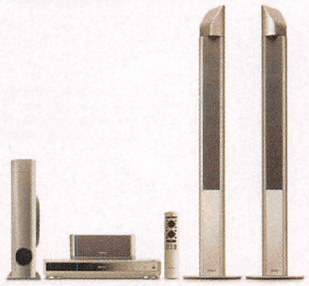

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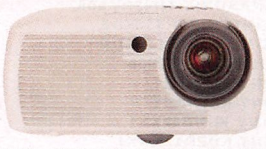

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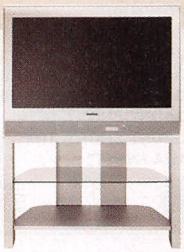

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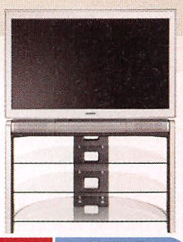

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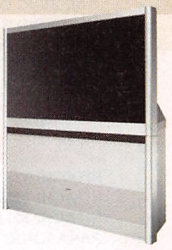

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van den Hul The Name	40	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo interconnect under £50 in Awards 2004. Cracking choice.	●			0.8m	7.3	●	●			●		

van den Hul The Name

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van den Hul The Name

van den Hul The Source	65	05.00/GT	★★★★★	Wonderfully-balanced wire for the money - we recommend it without hesitation.	●			0.8	7.0	●	●	●		●		●
Vivanco Prowire PHC2215	12	Awd.00	★★★★☆	Good value. Allows a weighty and powerful sound. A good step-up from freebies.	●			1.5		●				●		●
Vivanco Prowire SHQ	30	11.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Nicely put together, but it sounds a bit soft and woolly even by budget standards.	●			1.2		●	●			●		●
Wireworld Luna 5	30	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	Don't let the cheap price tag deceive you, this is a very solid budget performer.	●			1.0	5.0	●				●		●
Wireworld Oasis 5	100	03.05/GT	★★★★☆	Offers more space and dymanics than others but it lacks just a touch of insight.	●			1.0	7	●				●		●
Wireworld Rainbow 5	150	05.04/FT	★★★★☆	Six-channel cable - musical and punchy, with bags of attack and detail.	●			1.0	5x6/5	●	●			●		●

Mains cables, blocks & conditioners

Make the most of your equipment with superior mains cabling

BUDGET Up to £600

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: Cable	Block	Conditioner	Length (m)	CONDUCTOR: Copper	Silver	Carbon	Other	Captive lead	No of sockets	Figure of 8 (2pin)	IEC (3pin)
Black Rhodium Pow Management	300	10.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Boosts top- and bottom-end refinement, but reduces pure sonic punch.		●	●	2.0	●	●			●	8		●
Black Rhodium Super Mains	100	05.04/GT	★★★☆☆	An improvement over a kettle lead, but not a super mains cable - there's better.	●			1.25	●	●						
Clearer Audio Copper-Line	95	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Affordable upgrade that will deliver that extra ounce of performance from your kit.	●			1.0	●							
DeZorel PowerStation 1	549	08.03/FT	★★★★☆	Can work brilliantly with the right kit - make sure you audition before you buy.			●							2		
Ecosse The Big Orange	33	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Looks pretty unusual but its sonics cut the mustard.	●			1.0	●							
Isol-8 Cleanline 2	295	01.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Beats your regular supply from the mains but it's no class leader.			●	-						6		
Isotek Elite	80	05.04/GT	★★★☆☆	It sounds miles better than a free cable, but falls well short of full marks.	●			1.5	●							
Isotek Gemini 6-way	260	01.05/GT	★★★★★	Stunning performer giving a good overall tonal balance.		●								6		
Isotek GII Vision	549	09.04/FT	★★★★★	Best mains filter in Awards 2004. One of the most cost-effective upgrades.			●							6		
Isotek Isoplug	30	01.03/FT	★★★★☆	Eliminates mains noise, which could mean a smoother-sounding system.			●									
Isotek MiniSub	495	08.03/FT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Improves detail and transparency levels.		●	●							6		
Isotek Titan	1425	06.05/FT	★★★★★	It's not cheap, but in the right set-up it works wonderfully well.			●	-						2		
Merlin Bk Widow (4-way block)	125	08.03/FT	★★★★★	A cost-effective way to boost the bass weight and detail levels of your system.		●		2	●				●	4		●
Merlin Bk Widow v2	85	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Impressive but its delivery isn't quite as clear as we'd like for this money.	●			1.5	●							
Merlin Tarantula	50	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Offers killer value and sounds simply magical.	●			1.5	●							
Merlin Tarantula Figure 8	50	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Affordable upgrade - improvements are big enough to make it a worthy buy.	●			1.5	●							
Monster Power Centre HTS1000	160	01.05/GT	★★★☆☆	This filtered mains block performs better than standard mains blocks.		●	●							8		
Nordost Shiva	220	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Levels of detail are excellent, but sound is slightly lean and cost slightly steep.	●			2.0	●	●						
One Click Intelligent Mains Panel	30	08.02/FT	★★★☆☆	Allows you to switch off all your kit with one button - fine, if that's what you want.		●							●	6		●
Russ Andrews The Silencer	140	10.03/FT	★★★★☆	Gives a smooth and polished sound and extra bass weight to your system.			●									
Russ Andrews Classic PowerKord	75	05.04/GT	★★★★★	Best mains lead under £100 in Awards 2004. Impressively clean delivery.	●			1.27	●							

Russ Andrews Classic PowerKord

Believe it! Your whole musical experience will get a welcome boost – especially in the midrange: vocals sound much more solid, with greater presence and focus, while instruments are treated with an extra coat of realism and accuracy. This PowerKord is a Classic in more ways than one – a great addition to any hi-fi.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004
BEST MAINS LEAD UNDER £100
Russ Andrews Classic Powerkord

Russ Andrews Ref. Powerkord	115	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Not quite as good value as the Award winning £75 Classic PowerKord.	●			1.27	●				●			●
Smart Sound PL200 (P2000)	199	08.02/FT	★★★★★	The P2000 is a great upgrade for most systems. We'd certainly buy one.		●	●							2		
Supra Lorad CS-BS	35	09.05/FT	★★★★☆	One of the most cost-effective upgrades you can make.	●			1.5	●							
Tacima IF-I23 (SC5690)	179	05.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Works well with bright, aggressive hi-fi, but don't use on high-end kit			●	-						6		
True Col Ind Constrictor	100	05.04/GT	★★★★★	Has a vice-like grip but an open delivery. Uncovers nuances previously missed.	●			1.1	●	●						
vandenHul Mainsstream BS	225	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Best mains lead over £100 in Awards 2004. Singularly most effective upgrade.	●			2.5	●	●						
Wireworld Stratus 5 Power Cord	130	05.04/GT	★★★★★	Expensive, but this substantial cable is worth every penny - hugely impressive.	●			2	●							

Speaker stands

Essential to make the best of any standmounted speaker

BUDGET Up to £500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	DIMENSIONS: Height (cm)	Width (cm)	Depth (cm)	MATERIAL: Steel	Aluminium	Concrete	Wood	Glass	Carbon	Fillable	Top-plate spikes	Floor spikes
Alphason AG50	99	12.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	Performance and construction are disappointing at this price.	50	25	27	●						●		●
Apollo A4/6	80	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Beautifully built with an outstanding sound - a real bargain.	61	20	26	●						●		●
Atacama Nexus 6 (black)	60	12.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in Awards 2000. A steal for build, price and sonic balance.	60	25	30	●						●		●
Atacama R724 (black)	250	01.02/FT	★★★★☆	Fine choice for top speakers - maximise punch and bass response.	60	26	35	●						●	●	●
Atacama SE6	100	12.04/GT	★★★★☆	Good, even-handed all-round performer with some neat design touches.	60	25	30	●						●		●
Epos ST35	99	01.05/GT	★★★★☆	Fine stands that work well with the right speakers.	56	17	15	●							●	●
Kudos S100	495	01.02/GT	★★★★★	Excellent, offering fine imaging, strong focus and outstanding bass.	61	32	32	●					●	●	●	●

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

GLOSSARY
page 186

What i How & Where..

TO BUY YOUR HI-FI SYSTEM

"...too many people today know the price of everything and the value of nothing."

Oscar Wilde

Isn't it easy to buy a new system? You read the magazine product reviews, you find out who sells the recommendations, five-star favourites or best buys at the cheapest price, you order the system, get a friend who knows his onions to install it - and live happily ever after.

This is a fairly well-trodden path but it leads to dissatisfaction, endless upgrades and a lot of wasted money. It's likely that the system will help you lose interest in music pretty rapidly. The problem is that there are more myths about hi-fi than Aesop's Fables. CD gives you perfect sound. All CD players sound the same. A £50 CD player plays high fidelity music. All magazine reviewers are experts. Big speakers are always better than small ones. More watts per channel is everything. MP3 format gives you high quality. A collection of 'Best Buy' components will be a great system. And so on and so on. All myths.

Get the best system for your money by asking our Top Twenty UK specialist hi-fi dealers.

Music - the real aim

Our aim must be to buy a hi-fi system that will prove musically satisfying, reliable and deliver true value for money. If the system doesn't excite you musically you've wasted your money. What is even worse is that you may not even realise you've bought a bad egg – you'll just switch the TV on instead and your desire to listen to music will gradually diminish. Have you ever been in a pub or club where you realise it's very difficult to conduct a conversation, even to the extent of being really tiring? A poor quality system continuously distorts but I don't mean it necessarily reaches the point of audibly breaking up. With a top quality system you can play music very loudly and still hold a conversation because it's free of distortion. A poor system is tiring to listen to even when it's played at low volume.

If you want proof, go into a shoe or clothes shop where they play background 'music' and try to enjoy listening. It's odds on you'll fail.

What and Where to buy

The system you think you want may not be right for you. So where do you start? Here's an important tip... **don't** start with WHAT – start with WHERE. There is only one way to give yourself the best chance of getting it right first time, and that's through a specialist hi-fi dealer. Now it's likely you have preconceived ideas that may put you off visiting one. Although you would welcome the advice and guidance, you don't know the technical jargon. You don't want to be talked down to. Your friend has said they only sell expensive gear and they're not interested if you don't have a big budget. They're expensive. Again, just myths. Most specialist hi-fi dealers are running their business because, above all, they love music. They spend a large portion of

their time listening to music and comparing systems to get the best possible results. They know the component combinations which don't gel together and, conversely, they know the combinations which give the best performance within a given price range. But they all also know the system must suit you.

Buying or being sold to?

Now there's a group of long-established specialist dealers who are totally committed to putting the customer first. Their idea of 'selling' is to discuss your requirements, offer their advice, give you the best options, then play the systems for you and allow you to be the judge.

Listening to your choice of music in a peaceful, well organised demonstration room, you may be surprised and, almost certainly, relieved to discover how easy it is to hear the differences between components and between systems. You'll be able to make a clear and informed decision about what to buy. It comes down to trusting your own judgement rather than the opinion of a reviewer you've never met ...and who won't refund your money if you're not satisfied or be at the end of a phone to sort out any problem you might encounter.

The story doesn't end there. These shops won't abandon you once you've put your hand in your pocket. They won't leave you to set up the system you've selected as best you can. They'll install it in your home, make sure it sounds great, and make sure you're entirely happy with the way it works. Why? Because a high proportion of these dealers' custom comes through people who have bought from them before, either directly or by commendation. It's vital to them to get it right for you.

Getting the best deal

Oscar Wilde wrote "...too many people today know the price of everything and the value of nothing." Specialist retailers know that not all potential purchasers will seek them out. They tend to attract the more discerning, thoughtful customers. Let's face it, a good deal is about a great deal more than just price. After all, unless you've got money to burn, you'll be living with your new system for years. Most of these dealers offer much longer equipment guarantees than provided by the manufacturer, a very worthwhile benefit, but it also makes it in the dealer's interest to ensure high build quality and reliability. Maybe you could save a few pounds by buying piecemeal but you'll lose out on the overall package. As far as the dealers are concerned, maybe they believe that taking care of their customers properly is a nicer way of doing business than just handing over boxes.

STAR QUALITIES

VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★

SERVICE ★★★★★

FACILITIES ★★★★★

VERDICT ★★★★★

QUALITY ASSURED ★★★★★

Listed below are 20 of the best hi-fi shops in the country. They have been selected because they are known to do an excellent job in guiding customers towards hi-fi that will give them years of musical enjoyment and total satisfaction.

OUR TOP 20 UK SPECIALIST HI-FI DEALERS

LONDON

N1 GRAHAMS HI-FI
190a New North Road.
020 7226 5500

SW11 ORANGES & LEMONS
61/63 Webbs Road, Battersea.
020 7924 2043

SOUTH

Ashford, Kent
SOUNDCRAFT HI-FI
40 High St. 01233 624441

Brighton THE POWERPLANT
40 Church Road, Hove
01273 775542

Chelmsford RAYLEIGH HI-FI
216 Moulsham Street.
01245 265245

Colchester RAYLEIGH HI-FI
33 Sir Isaac's Walk.
01206 577682

Horsham AUDIO DESIGNS
7-9 Park Place.
01403 252255

Kingston-upon-Thames
INFIDELITY
9 High Street Hampton Wick.
020 8943 3530

Rayleigh, Essex
RAYLEIGH HI-FI
44a High St. 01268 779762

Ringwood, Hampshire
PHONOGRAPHY
Star Lane. 01425 461230

Southend-on-Sea
RAYLEIGH HI-FI
132/4 London Road.
01702 435255

Southampton PHASE 3 HI-FI
37 Bedford Place.
023 8022 8434

Worthing PHASE 3 HI-FI
213-217 Tarring Road.
01903 245577

MIDLANDS

Banbury OVERTURE
3 Church Lane.
01295 272158

Birmingham SOUND ACADEMY
152a High Street, Bloxwich.
01922 493499

Coventry FRANK HARVEY
163 Spon Street.
024 7652 5200

Leicester CYMBIOSIS
6 Hotel St. 0116 262 3754

Nottingham
CASTLE SOUND & VISION
48/50 Maid Marian Way.
0115 9584404

NORTH

Cheadle THE AUDIO WORKS
14 Stockport Road.
0161 428 7887

Sheffield
MOORGATE ACOUSTICS
184 Fitzwilliam St.
0114 275 6048

Warrington CHRIS BROOKS AUDIO
29 Gaskell Street.
01925 261212

York SOUND ORGANISATION
2 Gillygate. 01904 627108

SCOTLAND

Glasgow LOUD & CLEAR
520 St Vincent St, Finnieston.
0141 221 0221

Edinburgh LOUD & CLEAR
26 Hamilton Place,
Stockbridge.
0131 226 6500

N. IRELAND

Belfast LYRIC HI-FI
429-431 Lisburn Road.
028 90 381296

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1 x smart remote control.
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1 x front iPod port.
1 x £1000 inc. v.a.t.

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the perfect solution.

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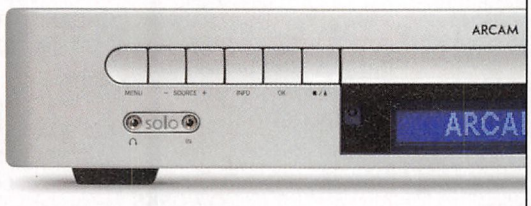
Arcam alto speakers from..



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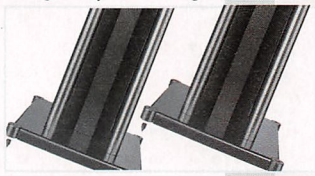
Speaker stands continued...

Essential to make the best of any standmounted speaker

BUDGET Up to £500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	DIMENSIONS Height (cm)	Width (cm)	Depth (cm)	MATERIAL Steel	Aluminium	Concrete	Wood	Glass	Carbon	Fillable	Top-plate spkies	Floor spkies
Kudos S50	160	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Weighty build and first-class performance, but rivals do it cheaper.	61	32	32	●						●		●
Mission Stance	100	08.03/GT	★★★★☆	Competent, but the resulting sound can lack authority and presence.	58	21	28	●						●	●	●
Mission Stancette	60	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Good all-round performers and attractive design. Excellent for the price.	57	17	23	●								●
Partington Dreadnought Brdside.	250	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Expensive but justifiable, improvements to sound are amazing.	60			●						●		●
Partington Super Dreadnought	169	08.03/GT	★★★★★	Best speaker stands in Awards 2004. Dramatic boost to a system.	60	16	17	●						●		●



Partington Super Dreadnought

The industrial design might not suit all tastes, but there's no faulting the performance: every standmount speaker we tested – from £200 Monitor Audios all the way up to £1000 ATCs – sounded better sat on top of a pair of these. Clearer midrange and more bass make these highly effective accessories.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004
BEST SPEAKER STANDS
Partington Super Dreadnought

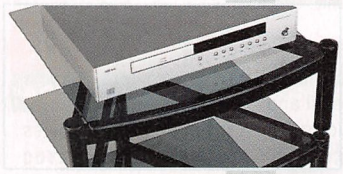
Sound Organisation Z522	100	12.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Heavyweight build quality but restrictive dynamics.	57	25	30	●						●	●	●
Soundstyle ST122	120	12.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Full marks for aesthetics, but performace falls short of the best.	57	23	28	●						●	●	●
Stands Unique Reflection (car fib)	379	01.02/GT	★★★★☆	Elegant, slim-pillar designs - offer open treble and plenty of agility.	61	17	20				●	●	●		●	●

Equipment racks

Provide a solid, secure and stylish home for your treasured kit

BUDGET Up to £1100

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Width (cm)	Depth (cm)	Height (cm)	No of shelves	Shelf size (wd) cm	MATERIAL Steel	Aluminium	Wood	Glass	Other	Glass shelves
Alphason AD3/105-s	349	04.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	Solid and stylish affair - others get better results from your kit.	54	118	45	3	105/45	●					●
Alphason AD5/47CPB	269	09.03/GT	★★★☆☆	It's aesthetically pleasing but it won't suit pricier hi-fi systems.	72	61	52	5	47/52	●					
Alphason Aragon AG54/2	105	08.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Best with mini systems and other light, budget kit.	79	54	44	2	54x33	●					●
Apollo Mezzo Soprano	390	04.04/GT	★★★★☆	This is a superbly versatile rack that reveals fine sound and pictures.	48	55	45	3	55/45	●					●
Atacama Equinox	300	10.01/GT	★★★★★	Accessories Product of the Year, Equinox range, in Awards 2004.	90	55	55	4	55x55	●			●		●



Atacama Equinox

This year's accessories Product of the Year makes such a difference to systems it has to be heard to be believed: bass notes come to life, any treble harshness is softened, and the midrange and vocals become more open and natural. Costing from £140, these modular units are a superb budget upgrade.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
ACCESSORIES
ATACAMA EQUINOX RANGE

Atacama Equinox AV	400	04.04/GT	★★★★★	Accessories Product of the Year, Equinox range, in Awards 2004.	61	106	55	3	106x55	●			●		●
Audiophilebase StarBase	1063	12.02/FT	★★★★★	It isn't cheap, but its one of the best supports we've come across.	65	59	52	3	59/52		●	●			
Clearlight Aud. Aspekt	550	04.02/FT	★★★★★	One of the best equipment supports around, if your system justifies it.	75	66	57	4	48/40			●		●	
Clearlight Aud Aspekt Dble Helix	800	09.03/GT	★★★★☆	Excellent system enhancer - build and finish don't justify price.	75	66	57	4	48x40			●		●	
Custom Design Aspect 850	330	03.01/GT	★★★★☆	This is a product that helps deliver tonal evenness and clarity.	85	56	46	5	37x46	●					●
Custom Design Concept 400	320	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Excellent build quality and neat looks, plus a clear and controlled delivery.	70	49	40	2	47x37	●					●
Custom Design Élite E5	300	10.01/GT	★★★☆☆	Good, with the distance between shelves adjustable, but not great.	69	62	51	5	37x47	●					●
Custom Design Tuscan 4	200	09.03/GT	★★★☆☆	A mediocre rack from Custom Design in terms design and performance.	50	35	43	4	53x43	●					●
Custom Design Ultra Corner 3AV	380	04.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Clever stand presents an enjoyable picture and allows for vibrant sound.	53	113	51	3	113x52	●					●
Futureglass Gem Separates	400	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Combines great styling with clever flexibility - don't use with bright kit.	65	60	40	4	49x28	●					●
Henley MR5	350	05.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Flexible but sound-wise it's outclassed - don't use for bright electronics.	91	56	50	5	54x45		●				●
Optimum AVFF3 SL	349	04.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Affordable, space-friendly rack, perfect for small spaces and flat screens.	58	110	40	3	110x61	●			●		●
Optimum OPT 4000	299	08.04/GT	★★★★☆	No-nonsense design that is highly competent and well built.	61	61	52	4	46x37	●					●
Optimum OPT 5500	350	03.01/GT	★★★★☆	An excellent design from Optimum that's stable and simple looking.	81	61	52	5	61x52	●			●		●
Partington Minim	389	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Superb AV rack - so sonically effective even fine details are improved.	59	160	54	3	160x54	●					●
Quadraspire Q4	500	08.04/GT	★★★★☆	The acrylic Q4 delivers an enjoyable sound; a rack to aspire to.	50	60	40	4	60x40		●			●	
Soundstyle ST310	395	01.04/FT	★★★★☆	Stylish and roomy AV rack but you're limited to just three shelves.	27	45	21	3	38x21	●					●
Soundstyle Status ST100	350	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Ultra-stable; a class leading performance and worth every penny.	80	78	54	4	57x47	●					●
Soundstyle XS105	345	10.01/GT	★★★★☆	Fine rack, reveals great dynamics and tight, powerful bottom end.	92	67	49	5	56x48	●					●
Target CL430	229	05.05/FT	★★★★☆	Solid number both in terms of performance and build.	80	61	48	4	47x48			●		●	
Target S230	229	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Big, solid piece that can both hold things up well, and perform brilliantly.	61	57	83	4	49x50	●		●			
Triskom HC-06	499	04.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	Attractive wooden construction but it's not especially good value.	52	100	57	3	100x57			●			●
Triskom Tower 12	450	09.03/GT	★★★★☆	Well-designed - soundstage and dynamics feel a little restrained.	100	57	50	6	57x45			●			●

Headphones

A top pair of cans provides a bargain route to quality sounds

BUDGET Up to £750

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE In-ear	On-ear	Over-ear	Open	Closed	Weight (g)	3.5mm jack	6.3mm jack	Cable length (m)	Impedance (ohms)
AKG Hearo 777 Quadra	225	12.02/FT	★★★☆☆	Wireless headphones from AKG that can simulate eight speakers in the cans.			●	●		320	●	●	n/a	
AKG K141 Monitor	87	07.02/GT	★★★☆☆	A retro design and surprisingly comfortable, but they lack dynamic range.		●		●		225	●	●	3	600
AKG K14P	15	05.05/GT	★★★★☆	Cheap and cheerful - deliver an enjoyable listening experience.	●			●		5.0	●		1.15	126
AKG K24P	22	05.05/GT	★★★★★	Excellent value for money - their exciting, dynamic delivery will win admirers.		●		●		62	●		1.5	32
AKG Merlin 232	200	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Wireless, well-designed and largely effective - worth a look if you want to go wireless.			●	●		172	●		-	-
Altec Lansing Oyoyo	20	05.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Uncomfortable to wear and the performance is sub-standard.		●		●		127	●		-	32

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

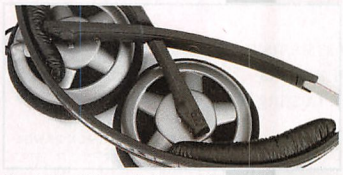
GLOSSARY
page 186

Headphones continued...

A top pair of cans provides a bargain route to quality sounds

BUDGET Up to £750

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: In-ear	On-ear	Over-ear	Open	Closed	Weight (g)	3.5mm jack	6.3mm jack	Cable length (m)	Impedance (ohms)
B&O A8	90	05.05/GT	★★★★☆	If you're keen on making a style statement these are certainly worth considering.	●			●		22	●		1.2	19
Beyer DT 990	160	10.03/FT	★★★★☆	Use a suitable headphone amplifier and you're guaranteed a pleasant listen.			●	●		250	●	●	3	250
Beyer DT231 Galactic	40	Awd.01	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Delivers with confidence and dynamic agility.			●		●	130	●	●	2.5	32
Beyer DTX700	45	03.04/FT	★★★☆☆	This product provides a hefty, punchy listen, but the excitable treble can be tiring.			●	●		180	●	●	3	32
Beyer DTX800	55	04.04/GT	★★★☆☆	The Beyer DTX800 is good in parts, but at this price they rate only average.			●	●		190	●	●	3	32
Beyer DTX900	65	12.03/GT	★★★★★	Impressive, and would be ideal for regular headphone users looking for comfort.			●	●		180	●	●	3	32
Bose TriPort	120	12.03/GT	★★★★☆	Excellent pair of headphones - weighty delivery and great style and build quality.			●		●	142	●	●	1.3	
Etymotic Research ER-6i Isolator	100	07.05/FT	★★★☆☆	These iPod-aimed phones get to the core of tunes but the fit is intrusive.	●				●	12	●		1.5	48
Grado RS1	750	04.04/GT	★★★★★	A ludicrously pricey pair of headphones but the sound is that good - really!			●	●		255		●	2	32
Grado SR325i	310	07.05/FT	★★★★★	Expensive, but worth it as long as the rest of your system is up to scratch.			●	●		200		●	2	32
Grado SR60	90	01.03/FT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. The Grados offer a remarkably airy, open sound.			●	●		200	●	●	2	32
Panasonic RP-HC50	30	12.03/GT	★★★☆☆	OK if you're after noise-cancelling on the cheap, but not great for everyday listening.	●					7	●			
Panasonic RP-WF930 (cordless)	60	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Sensible pricing, but they fail to inspire due to their overly 'safe' balance.			●		●				0	
Philips HD1500 (cordless surr)	350	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Extremely capable and the sound is lovely, but the high price loses them a star.			●		●	n/a			-	-
Pioneer SE-DIR800C (cordless surr)	295	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Easy to use and comfortable, but sound quality disappoints considering the price.			●		●	250			-	
Sennheiser HD 270	80	11.00/GT	★★★★☆	If you want to lock yourself away these circumaural headphones are for you.			●		●	220	●	●	3	64
Sennheiser HD 280 Pro	100	04.04/GT	★★★★★	The HD280 Pros are terrific all-rounders - particularly recommended for DJs.			●		●	220	●	●	n/a	64
Sennheiser HD25	170	12.03/GT	★★★★☆	Show that closed-back headphones don't have to mean a closed-in sound.			●		●	140	●	●	1.5	70
Sennheiser HD555	100	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Another impressive pair of headphones from Sennheiser. Standard at-home design.			●	●		260	●	●	3	120
Sennheiser HD650	300	02.04/FT	★★★★★	Pricey, but with the right standard of system they are a must listen product.			●	●		260	●	●	3	300
Sennheiser MX500 white	25	09.05/FT	★★★★★	White to match your iPod - sound immeasurably better than any bundled in-ears.	●					6	●		1.0	32
Sennheiser MX500 (in-ear)	20	01.01/FT	★★★★★	Delivers much better bass, imaging and tonal purity than freebie in-ears.	●					6	●		1.0	32
Sennheiser PMX60	30	12.03/GT	★★☆☆☆	Diappointing neckband 'phones - non-adjustable neckband and thin sound.			●		●	55	●	●	1.0	32
Sennheiser PX10	20	05.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Haven't got the quality or user-friendly appeal of others.	●			●		n/a	●		1.0	32
Sennheiser PX100	35	05.05/GT	★★★★★	Best headphones in Awards 2004. Faultless sonic ability whatever the musical genre.		●		●		60	●	●	1.4	32



Sennheiser PX100

Best headphones in our Accessories category, the PX100s demand you chuck those free headphones away! For just £30, you get bags more bass, detail and dynamics than you ever thought your personal hi-fi capable of reproducing. The neat folding design and carry case add to the impression of superb engineering.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004
BEST HEADPHONES
Sennheiser PX100

Sennheiser PXC250 (noise-canc)	90	12.03	★★★★★	Noise cancelling 'phones - ideal travel companion for music-loving frequent flyers.		●			●	65	●	●	1.8	300
Sennheiser PXC300 (noise-canc)	129	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Superb if you want to listen to music - rather than your fellow commuters.		●			●	65	●		1.8	300
Shure E2c	77	05.05/FT	★★★★☆	Highly impressive all-round performance but the design won't suit everyone.	●					30	●		1.57	16
Sony MDR-DS3000 (cordless surr)	200	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Don't have the sonic talent to impress and the wraparound effect isn't convincing.			●	●		275			-	
Sony MDR-ED21LP	20	12.03/GT	★★★★★	Superb - these Sonys are an ideal, affordable upgrade for portable users.	●					5	●	●	1	16
Sony MDR-EX71SL	35	05.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Stylish but, considering the price, they give a disappointing sonic performance.	●			●		4.0	●		0.5	16
Sony MDR-G64SL	18	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Uncomfortable, but look good and have a clear and detailed presentation.		●		●		45	●		0.5	24
Sony MDR-V700DJ	100	04.04/GT	★★★☆☆	In some respects they're impressive headphones, but sound quality is patchy.			●		●	300	●	●	3	24
Technics RP-DH1200	117	11.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	Aimed at the DJ market - they are real disappointment to use.			●		●	n/a		●	n/a	50
Turbosound in-ear headphones	20	09.04/FT	★★☆☆☆	Designed to protect your hearing, sadly they are uncomfortable and music-killing.	●					16	●		1.0	
Vivanco SR620	25	12.03/GT	★★☆☆☆	Clever design but there's little to recommend these portable Vivanco headphones.			●		●	150	●	●	3	32

Remote controls

Control all your equipment from a single handset

BUDGET Up to £200

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Batteries	Battery life (h)	Rechargeable	Backlight	Touchscreen	Macro functions	PC programmable	Dimensions (hxwxd) cm
Cambridge Audio M1+Explorer	50	01.05/GT	★★★★★	Bargain - its large LCD display and quick learning make it a joy to use.	4xAAA			●	●	●		18x3x8
Philips ProntoNEO SBCRU930	200	09.02/FT	★★★★★	Makes your system simple enough for anyone to operate - a worthwhile upgrade.	3xAA			●	●	●	●	18x7x3

MP3 players

Store up to 10,000 tunes and take them everywhere you go

BUDGET Up to £600

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	PLAYS: MP3	WMA	AAC	Radio	Microphone	Storage capacity	USB	USB 1.1	USB 2.0	FireWire	PC	Mac	Battery life	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Weight (gm)
Apple iPod 20GB	209	09.05/GT	★★★★★	The new look is stunning value - great sound and easy to use.	●		●			20G			●	●	●	●	12	10x6x1.6	167
Apple iPod Mini 4GB	139	02.05/FT	★★★★★	Gorgeous styling, and a joy to use - now with extra battery life.	●		●			4G	●	●	●	●	●	●	18	5.1x9.1x1.3	103
Apple iPod Mini 6GB	169	07.05/ST	★★★★★	Stunning sound with great style and usability as standard.	●		●			6G	●		●	●	●	●	18	5.1x9.1x1.3	103

★★★★★ Average
★★★★★ Below par
★★★★★ Poor

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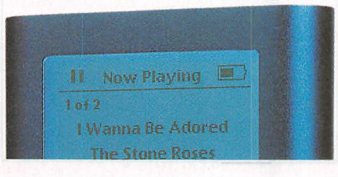
BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

GLOSSARY
page 186



Apple iPod Mini 6GB

The iPod Mini used to be the only Apple MP3 player that wasn't best in class, but the introduction of the second generation changed all that. With its improved battery life and extra 2GB of memory (there is a cheaper 4GB version, too), it's now firmly top of the pile – largely due to its slick controls and wonderful sound.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION BEST IN CLASS

MP3 players

Store up to 10,000 tunes and take them everywhere you go

BUDGET Up to £600

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	PLAYS MP3	WMA	AAC	Radio	Microphone	Storage capacity	USB	USB 1.1	USB 2.0	FireWire	PC	Mac	Battery life	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Weight (gm)
Apple iPod Photo 60GB	299	02.05/FT	★★★★★	Fourth-generation iPod with a colour screen to view photos.	●		●			60G	●	●	●	●	●	●	15	6.1x10.4xx1.9	181
Apple iPod Shuffle	89	04.05/GT	★★★★★	Chewing-gum-sized unit with a big memory and great sound.	●		●			1G	●	●	●		●	●	12	2.5x8.4x0.84	22
Archos AV320	586	12.03/GT	★★★★☆	Jukebox with audio and video recording and playback.	●	●			●	20G	●	●	●		●	●	10	11x8x3	350
Archos AV400	400	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Best multimedia portable in Awards 2004. High standards.	●	●				20G		●			●	●	12	13x8x2	280
Archos Gmini 400	235	03.05/GT	★★★★★	A genuine master of all trades in the portable market.	●	●			●	20G	●	●	●		●	●	10	6x11x1.7	160
B&O Beosound 2	325	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Expensive but breathtakingly beautiful and it sounds exciting.	●	●		●		512M					●	●	8	7.3x	4.5
Creative Jukebox Zen Xtra	300	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Excellent-value option for high-capacity use.	●	●				60G		●	●		●		14	11x8x2	224
Creative MuVo Micro N200	60	04.05/GT	★★★★☆	Generous spec for the money and decent sound.	●	●		●	●	256M	●	●	●		●		15	7x3x1.3	34
Creative MuVo Slim	80	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Elegant and attractive, but it doesn't match the class leaders.	●	●		●	●	256M	●	●	●		●		17	9x6x.5	34
Creative MuVo TX 256	50	07.04/FT	★★★★★	Not exactly feature-laden compared to some but sounds great.	●	●				256M	●	●	●		●		15	71x36x14	36
Creative Zen Micro	150	07.05/ST	★★★★☆	Neat and sounds good, but isn't as easy to use as some rivals	●	●		●	●	5G			●	●	●		12	5x9x2	108
Creative Zen PMC Jukebox	399	01.05/GT	★★★★★	Multimedia - portable video and audio winner.	●	●				20GB	●	●	●		●		22	81x14x27	340
Creative Zen Touch 20GB	180	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Creative's most impressive jukebox yet.	●	●		●		20G	●	●	●		●		24	7x11x2	203
Creative Zen Touch 40GB	230	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Massive memory, great operation and excellent sound.	●	●				40GB		●	●		●		24	10x6x2.2	220
iRiver H10	179	07.05/ST	★★★☆☆	Plenty of features but against new rivals it's fairly average.	●	●		●	●	5G	●	●	●	●	●		12	6x10x1.5	96
iRiver H340	349	11.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Size, price and dreadful design cost it a couple of stars.	●	●		●	●	40		●	●		●	●	16	6x10x2	203
iRiver PMP-140	449	01.05/GT	★★★★☆	Multimedia - quality screen and good file compatibility.	●	●		●		40G	●	●	●		●	●	16	14x8x3	299
Ministry of Sound Stix MP020	60	11.04/GT	★★★★★	A fine funky player for both design and performance.	●	●				128M	●				●		15	9x4x2	29
Ministry of Sound Stix MPO43	120	11.04/FT	★★★★☆	Brilliant little player but the awful headphones let it down.	●	●				256		●	●		●	●	15	8x3x2	29
MobiBLU DAH-1500	80	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Amazing little cube that's a delight to use - up to 1GB storage.	●	●				256		●			●	●	256	2.4x2.4x2.4	18
Monolith II	119	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Handsome looks plus authority and detail in spades.	●	●		●	●	256		●			●		19	4x8x1.5	65
Mpio FD100	59	06.04/FT	★★☆☆☆	Good specification, but the performance is disappointing.	●	●		●	●	128M	●	●			●	●	24	7x7x2	61
Mpio FL100	80	02.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Lots of flexibility, but performance is merely average.	●	●		●	●	128M	●	●			●	●	11	4x8x1.4	42
Mpio HD200	189	07.05/ST	★★☆☆☆	Promising specs are let down by its aesthetics and controls.	●	●		●	●	5G	●	●	●		●	●	10	6x8x1.5	55
MPman MP-FOL6	70	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Despite small sonic shortcomings it's a very decent player.	●	●				512M		●	●		●	●	10	7x4x1.8	40
MPman MP-FOL8	140	11.04/FT	★★★★☆	Well specified, light and covetable, but music doesn't sparkle.	●	●		●		256		●			●		13	3x8x1.3	29
Mustek PVR-A1	90	01.05/FT	★★★★★	Multimedia jukebox, cracking introduction to portable video.	●	●			●	32M		●			●		3.5	8x9x2	110
Mustek PVR-H140	199	04.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Portable media player - incredible price for what it can do.	●	●			●	40G	●	●	●		●	●	6	8x11x3	290
Olympus m:robe MR-100	160	07.05/ST	★★★★☆	Killer looks and enjoyable sound but it's expensive.	●	●				5G	●	●	●		●		12	5x9x1.5	100
Olympus m:robe MR-500i	350	09.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Good features, but the sound quality is average and it's pricey.	●	●				20G			●		●		8	7x11x2.1	210
Oregon Scientific MP100	80	11.04/FT	★★★★☆	Minuscule - its ultra-portable appeal is undeniable.	●	●		●		128M		●	●		●	●	10	4x3x2	28
Panasonic SV-SD100V	99	09.05/FT	★★★★☆	Tiny, shiny SD-Card based MP3 player - sounds good, too.	●	●	●	●	●	512M		●			●		14.5	4x4x1.8	27.4
Perstel Adapt DR201	130	06.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Built-in DAB tuner - jack of all trades, master of none.	●			●		64M	●				●		6	6x8x2	80
Rio Carbon Pearl	159	07.05/ST	★★★★★	Relative bargain in terms of performance - well worth five stars.	●	●			●	5G	●	●	●		●	●	20	6x8x1.4	90
Rio Forge Sport	99	04.05/GT	★★★★☆	Good sound, good specs, and good use of rubber.	●	●		●		256	●	●	●		●	●	20	6x7x2.2	50
Samsung YH-820	169	07.05/ST	★★★☆☆	Impressive sound quality but let down by various irritations.	●	●			●	5G	●	●	●		●		12	5x9x1.5	85
Samsung YH-925	250	09.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Promises plenty, but delivers utterly average performance.	●	●		●	●	20G			●		●		10	11x6x1.7	150
Sony NW-E55	119	04.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Looks great and comes with good software - but sound is poor.	●	●				128		●	●		●		60	6x4x1.5	40
Sony NW-HD3	219	03.05/GT	★★★★☆	Good battery life and sound quality, but there are annoyances.	●	●				20G	●	●	●		●		30	6x9x1.5	130
Sony Walkman NW-HD5	200	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Cracking player - compelling mix of big sound and small size.	●	●				20GB			●		●		40	9x6x1.5	135
Tapwave Zodiac 2	250	01.05/GT	★★★★★	Stunning, truly portable player - games, music and movies.	●	●				128M	●	●	●		●		8	8x14x2	196
Tatung Elio	230	07.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Fair offering, but there are better players available at this price.	●	●			●	20G	●	●	●		●		12	7x17x1.9	179
Thomson Lyra PDP 2845	252	03.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Good value but other products have more to offer.	●	●				40G		●	●		●		n/a	8x7x2.3	163
Thomson Lyra PDP2812	199	07.05/ST	★★☆☆☆	Good sound and picture storage but glitches let it down.	●	●		●		5G	●	●	●		●		12	5x9x1.5	84
Thomson Lyra PDP2860	299	01.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Multimedia jukebox - isn't bad, but you can buy much better.	●	●				20G		●	●		●		12	14x8x2	297
Toshiba Gigabeat EG-F20	230	09.05/GT	★★★★☆	Gorgeous looks and dynamic and rhythmic sound.	●	●				20G		●	●		●		16	11x6x1.6	160
WeWa Butterfly	140	11.04/FT	★★☆☆☆	For price and performance, this butterfly doesn't quite fly.	●	●		●		256	●				●		15	9x4x2	62
WeWa Dolphin	100	11.04/FT	★★☆☆☆	Stylish, but the sound lets it down.	●	●				256		●			●	●	12	10x3x2	37
Xclef HD-800	199	11.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Useful player, but sound could be better.	●	●		●	●	20G	●	●	●		●	●	16	7x10x2.2	180
Xen EMP-200	89	11.04/FT	★★★★☆	Offers smooth sound and smart, easy-to-use design	●	●		●		128M		●			●	●	16	8x4x2	40

CD & MD personals

High quality music-on-the-move from minimal investment

BUDGET Up to £400

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE CD	CD-RW	MD	MP3	WMA	AAC	Radio	Recorder	PC compatible	Mac compatible	Battery life (hrs)
Goodmans CDMP3622	39	07.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Good features, good price, but the sound is fairly thin and mean and it feels flimsy.	●	●		●							20
Goodmans GCD 610	25	10.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Almost unfeasibly cheap, but just don't expect sonic fireworks.	●										20
Ministry of Sound MOSCD025	50	07.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Needlessly large so not as useful as others. Dull top-end and bloated low frequencies.	●	●		●							n/a
Panasonic SL-J910	170	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Sexy CD player that fits pleasingly into a frame when used with its own little speakers.	●	●		●							115
Panasonic SV-SR100	400	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Fine CD/MP3 that includes a hugely useful SD card slot for recording CDs within the unit.	●			●	●	●		●	●		30
Philips ACT500	100	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Boxed and styled like Nike and ideal for those with a penchant for serious exercise.	●			●							12

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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BACK ISSUES
08456 777813

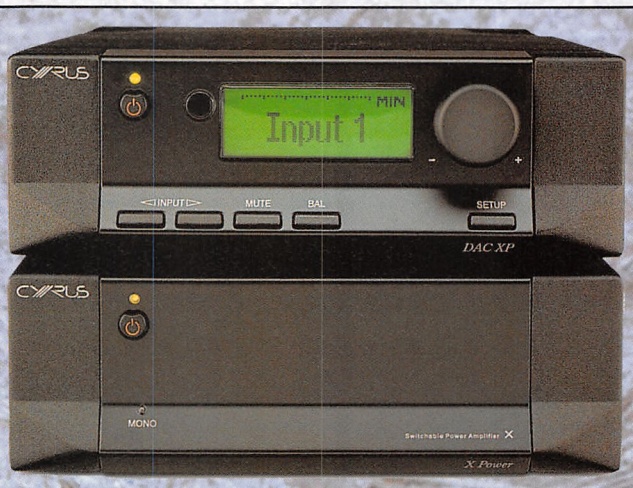
GLOSSARY
page 186

CYRUS

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION

★★★★★

September 05



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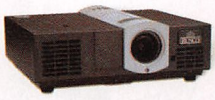

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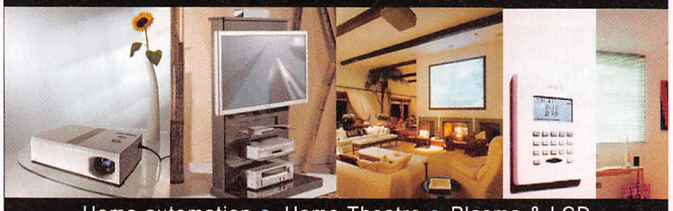

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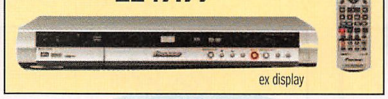

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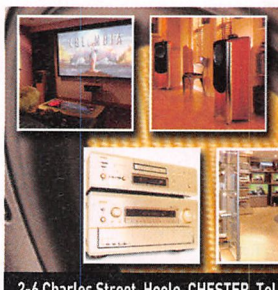

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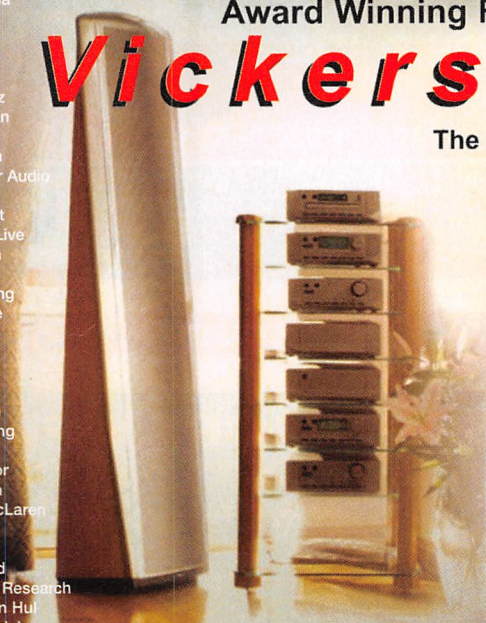

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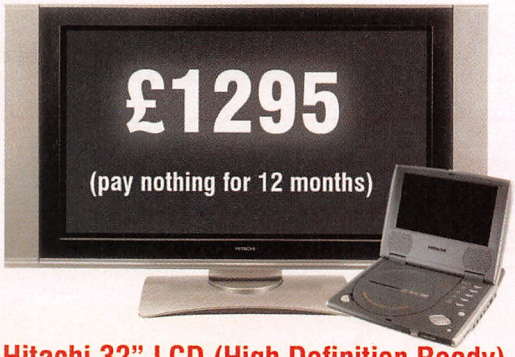

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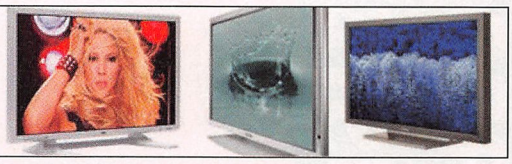

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p38

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A

AAC Compressed audio format popularised by Apple. Sounds better than MP3, though less products can play or handle it.
ANALOGUE The old-fashioned way of storing audio data, as used by VHS tapes, LPs and cassettes to store video or audio. (See Digital)
ANAMORPHIC Some DVDs offer an improved picture on widescreen TVs, banishing the so-called letterbox effect.
APPLE LOSSLESS This new audio compression format from Apple loses little quality over standard CD sound, but files are half the size.
ASPECT RATIO The physical proportions of a screen or image – a ratio of height and width. (see Widescreen)

B

BASS Low frequency sounds, which are hard to reproduce.
BASS REFLEX A speaker design using air-flow from a port in the cabinet to help deliver extended bass reproduction.
BIAMPING Each drive unit of a speaker is driven by a separate amp channel, so a pair of two-way speakers needs two stereo amps and two runs of cable to each speaker. (See Biwiring)
BINDING POST The terminal round the back of a speaker. It has a threaded collar for gripping bare wires and sometimes a socket that takes banana plugs, too.
BIT A single piece of digital information, basically an 'on/off' signal. (see DAC)
BIWIRING Gives some of the benefits of biamping, but at lower cost. You need suitable speakers (with two sets of inputs and a split crossover), then send twin runs of cable from the amp (again if suitable) to each speaker.
BIT-RATE The amount of information that's in an audio or video file, measured in kilobits per second (see Kbps)
BLU-RAY One of two rival formats aiming to provide a higher-quality successor to DVD. See also HD-DVD.

C

CARTRIDGE The device that plays a record. It converts the wobbles in the record's groove into electrical signals for your amp – either moving-magnet or moving-coil.
CD-R/-RW CD-Rs are record-once discs, while CD-RWs can be used many times.
COAXIAL One of the two types of digital audio connector. Offers a slightly better performance than optical, except when extremely long lengths of cable are used.
COLORATION This is a shift away from the natural rendition of the music. Coloration is undesirable 'boomy' bass, a 'nasal' midband or 'splashy' treble.
COMPONENT Superior to Scart, S-Video or composite, component cables carry video from a source (eg, DVD player) to a display (TV or projector). The cables use three coloured leads.
COMPOSITE The weakest of the video-only connections.
COMPRESSION (1) When talking about data, compression is the process of squeezing files to make them smaller, sometimes, as with MP3, by discarding some of the musical information to make the files more practical. (see Bit-rate)
COMPRESSION (2) Used by radio stations to reduce level differences between loud and soft parts of music.
CROSSOVER The circuit inside loudspeakers that splits the incoming signal, sending the high frequencies to the tweeter and the low ones to the low-frequency woofer.
CRT Cathode Ray Tube. The technology behind conventional televisions and large, high-end video projectors. Three colour tubes – one red, one green and one blue – are 'converged' to create an image on the screen.

D

p58 **DAB** Digital Audio Broadcasting: digital radio on BBC and independent stations. Can offer a better-quality, hiss-free sound.
DAC Digital-to-analogue converters (DACs) turn strings of bits into audio. CD players, MP3 players and AV processors all contain DACs. Standalone units also exist.
DECIBEL (dB) Measures sound pressure. A change of 1dB is just about audible, while +10dB sounds like the level has been doubled.
DECODING DVD soundtracks usually include multichannel audio in a certain format (see Dolby and DTS). You need a processor or AV amplifier to decode this info and pass it to multichannel speakers.
DIGITAL Digital data is stored in bits – as numbers that can be transferred with very little degradation in quality. Most modern hi-fi and AV components process digital data in the quest for the best audio and video performance.
p50 **DLP** Digital light processing is a projector technology that's usually superior to rival LCD.
DOCK Can be as simple as a socket for your MP3 player that then connects to your computer – otherwise, it might include speakers.
DOLBY One of the two companies that creates the multichannel soundtracks for films, which eventually get transferred to DVD. There are many formats, some of which are more advanced that others – for example, Dolby Digital and Dolby Digital Surround EX. (See DTS)
DTS Like Dolby (see above), DTS encodes DVD soundtracks for playback on compatible AV receivers.
DVD-AUDIO High-resolution audio format that offers multichannel surround music and 24-bit/96kHz stereo.
DVD or DVD-VIDEO Video on CD-sized discs – have huge capacity for movies, with widescreen and multichannel surround sound.
DVD-R/-RW The recordable DVD format supported by Pioneer. DVD-R recordings can't be erased, but DVD-RW discs are re-usable.
DVD+R/+RW Developed by Philips, this is a DVD recording format with similar properties to DVD-R/-RW, but not fully compatible.
DVD-RAM The third recordable DVD format. Includes a 'time-slip' function, so you can watch the start of a TV show while recording the rest.
DVI-D A high-quality digital connection for DVD players and displays, which carries audio and video without ever converting it to analogue.
DYNAMIC RANGE The range, in decibels, between the largest and smallest audio signals reproduced by hi-fi. Classical music often has large variations in loudness.

F

FIREWIRE Ultra-fast data connection used by MP3 players, computers and high-end home cinema equipment
p21 **FLOORSTANDER** A type of taller speaker that stands directly on the floor (sometimes on built-in spikes). Extra size means it can often produce bass sounds better than smaller speakers.
FREQUENCY High-pitched sounds have high frequency, whereas low-pitched ones have a low frequency. Audible sounds range from about 16Hz to 20kHz.

H

HARD-DISK A machine for storing large quanities of data. Hard disks first appeared in computers, and are now found in many different products – such as MP3 players (for audio and photos), set-top boxes and DVD recorders (for video and audio), and network music servers (for audio).
HDCD High Definition Compatible Digital – a coding system for compact disc that aims to get better sound. Needs a CD player fitted with a suitable decoder.
HD-DVD Competing with Blu-ray to be high-def format that eventually replaces DVD.
HDMI A high-quality digital connection going from DVD players to displays – competing with – and superior to – DVI-D.
HD READY Any new TV that's able to show High Definition broadcasts has this label.
HERTZ (Hz) Unit of frequency. One Hz means a signal has one cycle per second.
HIGH DEFINITION The next generation of TV broadcasts has a much better quality picture. Already popular in the USA and Japan, it's expected that BSkyB will be the first major broadcaster to transmit High-Def pictures in 2006. Requires a TV with at least 720 horizontal lines, and a certain standard of DVI or HDMI digital connector.
HORN-LOADED A method of improving the efficiency of a loudspeaker, using a structure that looks like a horn.

p58

p60

p68

p74

p76

I

IMPEDANCE A low impedance draws a high current flow from the source, while a high impedance draws a little. Speakers with a low impedance are more difficult for an amplifier to drive.

K

KBPS Kilobits per second. This is either a transfer rate – how fast data can be piped down a cable – or more commonly, it's a compression rate: how much data has been retained when a music track (eg, an MP3) has been compressed. A higher figure means faster data flow and better quality.

L

LCD Along with plasma, LCD is the main flatscreen TV technology. LCD is the dominant type for sets with screens under 37in, though larger sets are becomin available. Picture quality can't match. Similar technology is used for some projectors.
LINE LEVEL Describes inputs that don't need amplifying before the amp can use them.

M

p74 **MEDIA CENTER** When installed on a suitable PC, this piece of Microsoft software allows you to run your computer as a home-entertainment system – with TV tuning, hard-disk recording, DVD playback, and more.
MEMORY CARD A small plastic card that fits in electronic devices – from portable players to TVs, DVD recorders and video camera. It's possible to record audio, video or images onto the card and transfer data to or play it back on another compatible device or computer.
MIDRANGE The frequency range where most of the instruments and voices are heard. It must be of a high quality if singers, guitars, trumpets, and so on, are to sound natural.
MONOBLOC An independent mono power amplifier – so two monoblocs are required to run in a stereo system.
MP3 MPEG 1 Layer 3. The compression system used for downloading music files from the internet to a PC or MP3 player. It can reduce file sizes by a factor of 10 to enable faster downloads, though compressing files less means better quality.

N

NETWORK MUSIC SERVER Stores tracks from a large number of CDs (sometimes as MP3 files) and can pipe them around your home.
NETWORK MUSIC PLAYER Attaches to either a router or a network music server, and allows you to access music files that may be stored elsewhere. Also called a client.
NTSC The North American system of TV broadcasting. Not always compatible with the European PAL system.

O

OHM Unit of resistance to current. The impedance of a loudspeaker is measured in ohms – the lower the figure the harder it is to drive; so the higher, the easier it is.
OPTICAL A digital audio connector. (See Coaxial)

P

PAL The European system of TV broadcasting. (see NTSC)
PHONO STAGE Turntables' cartridges output signals at much lower levels than CD players, so need extra amplification (a phono stage). Many amps have ones built-in, but you can also buy dedicated phono amps.
PLASMA Currently the dominant type of large, flatscreen TV – sets are available up to 60in. Sizes go down to 37in, where they compete with LCD televisions directly.
POWER AMPLIFIER Supplies audio signals from the source component to the speakers.
POWER-HANDLING The highest safe power for speakers. Note, it's easier to damage speakers with an amp of too low power driven hard, than with too much.
PREAMPLIFIER The control part of an amp. Built into integrated amps, but can be separate and used with a power amp or active loudspeakers.
PRO-LOGIC (See below)
PROCESSING MODES Some AV amps and processors create multichannel soundtracks from stereo by creating the sound for the rear channels. Dolby Pro-Logic is one.
PROGRESSIVE SCAN Creates DVD pictures in one hit. Gives clearer, flicker-free images than the conventional system, which uses interlaced, rapidly refreshed horizontal lines.

R

RDS Radio Data System. Data piggybacked on FM radio allowing RDS tuners to display the names of stations, and perform a range of functions, such giving you up-to-the-minute traffic reports.
p28 **REAR-PROJECTION TV** A projector housed behind a screen in a large box – these TVs can give huge pictures, are less bulky than CRTs, and can offer excellent value.
ROUTER The part of a network that forms the hub to which all the computers are joined. Many have modems built-in, allowing many computers to share a single broadband internet connection.

S

SCART Scart cables can be video+audio, or video-only. The most commonly used AV connection, notable for its large, rectangular terminals. Not as good as component or digital connections.
SD CARD Type of memory card
SIX-CHANNEL INPUT Many DVD players now have built-in Dolby Digital decoders. To take advantage of these they need to be connected to a home cinema amp with a six-channel input.
SUBWOOFER A separate woofer box for deep bass. Is the 'point 1' in a 5.1 system.
STANDMOUNT A type of speaker typified by its compact dimensions. Sits on a dedicated support for the best sound. Often superior to similarly priced floorstanders in many areas, but less bass.
SUPER AUDIO CD (SACD) Developed by Sony and Philips, SACD uses one-bit Direct Stream Digital (DSD) technology. Most discs are dual-layer, with a CD layer that'll play on a normal CD player and an SACD layer for better performance when replayed on an SACD player.

T

TAPE LOOP Two sockets on an amplifier that let the signal out for tape-deck recording; there's another pair that let the signal back in for replay. So you can record and check recordings.
TONEARM The device on a turntable that holds the cartridge in place. Not all decks are supplied with one.
THROW RATIO Never buy a projector without making sure it'll fit in your room. First decide what size screen you want. Then measure the distance your new projector will be from the screen. Finally, use the throw ratio to work out if the projector is suitable. You'll find more details in the manual.
THX Developed by LucasFilm, a set of standards for Dolby Pro-Logic gear that should ensure a certain quality of home cinema sound.
TONEARM The part of a turntable that guides the needle on the record.
TRANSIENTS Short and sudden events in music such as a cymbal crash or the crack of a stick on a snare drum. Can be difficult to reproduce.
TREBLE High frequencies. When we say treble is 'splashy', it means that cymbals, for example, sound like they're going 'tizzshsh', rather than having a sting and a crispness to them.
TWEETER The small speaker driver that handles treble.

U

USB Another type of data connection (see FireWire), originally used only on computers, but now commonly used with MP3 players and other hi-fi and home cinema products. USB 2.0 replaces the slower 1.0.
p78

V

VALVE Amplifying device using electrodes in a glass vacuum enclosure. Produces a warm, seductive sound.

W

WATT More watts mean more power, but system loudness depends on loudspeaker sensitivity and room size.
WIDESCREEN More and more TV programmes, and nearly all DVD discs, are in widescreen format. This can vary from 14:9 (a compromise ratio used by TV broadcasters) to 16:9, which is the ratio used on widescreen television sets and by most DVDs. Many films shown at the cinema are in 21:9, so you'll still get black bars on a widescreen television. Old-fashioned 'square' TVs use a 4:3 size. (see Aspect Ratio)
WI-FI A system for connecting computer and hi-fi components without any cables.
WMA Windows Media Audio is a rival format to MP3. It can compresse files twice as effectively as MP3.
WOOFER The large drive unit in a speaker that makes bass.

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